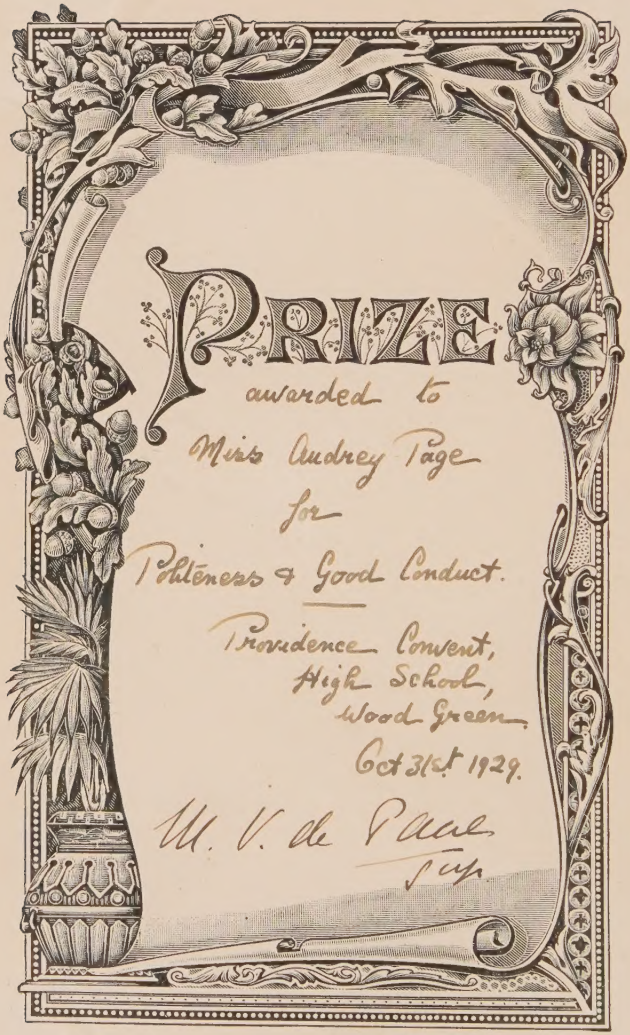

E.S.A LONDON. Nº 18.

THE POETRY OF TOIL

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THE POETRY OF TOIL

An Anthology of Poems

COMPILED BY

Dorothy Wooldridge

'Work apace, apace, apace,
Honest labour wears a lovely face.'
DEKKER

'When Adam delved and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?'

LONDON
Faber and Gwyer

First published in MCMXXVI by Faber and Gwyer, Limited, 24 Russell Square, London.
Made and Printed in Great Britain by Robert MacLehose and Company, Limited, The University Press, Glasgow.

DEDICATION

for

ETHEL HENRY

PREFATORY NOTE

THE sole purpose of this anthology is to present between two covers all the best English poems, which, whether explicitly or by implication, bear witness to the dignity, the pains, the joys, and the infinite diversity of labour. It has, and is intended to have, no political significance whatever. For this reason all propagandist hymns and political squibs have been rigidly excluded, even when their exclusion meant the loss of really spirited verse. Shelley's :

> Men of England, wherefore plough
> For the lords who lay you low ?
> Wherefore weave with toil and care,
> The rich robes your tyrants wear ? . . . .
>
> The seed ye sow, another reaps ;
> The wealth ye find, another keeps ;
> The robes ye weave, another wears ;
> The arms ye forge, another bears.
>
> Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap ;
> Find wealth—let no impostor heap ;
> Weave robes—let not the idle wear ;
> Forge arms—in your defence to bear

is superior as literature to some of the minor pieces printed here ; but since it is not to my present purpose, it has been omitted. Morris, too, has done some notable things of this kind :

> I heard men saying, Leave hope and praying,
> All days shall be as all have been ;
> To-day and to-morrow bring fear and sorrow,
> The never-ending toil between . . . .
>
> Where fast and faster our iron master,
> The thing we made, for ever drives,

Bids us grind treasure and fashion pleasure
For other hopes and other lives.

Where home is a hovel and dull we grovel,
Forgetting that the world is fair ;
Where no babe we cherish, lest its very soul perish ;
Where our mirth is crime, our love a snare ;

Who now shall lead us, what god shall heed us
As we lie in the hell our hands have won ?
For us are no rulers but fools and befoolers,
The great are fallen, the wise men gone.

Herein will be found no poem of this nature by Langland, Shelley, Morris, or Whitman, the four greatest democratic poets. Their loss may be regretted, but their inclusion would have changed the entire character of this book.

All political satire has been excluded. Excellent as much of it is, its interest is transitory. This racy rhyme of the Civil War :

Know this my brethren, heaven is clear,
And all the clouds are gone,
The righteous men shall flourish now
Good days are coming on.
Come then, my brethren, and be glad,
And eke rejoice with me,
Lawn sleeves and rochets shall go down,
And hey then up go we.

Whate'er the popish hands hath built,
Our hammers shall undo,
We'll break their pipes, and burn their copes,
And pull down churches too :

We'll exercise within the groves,
And teach beneath a tree,
We'll make a pulpit of a cask,
And hey then up go we

now has little interest except to the historian. For obvious reasons all modern political verse is omitted.

A word must be said about other omissions. After much thought I decided to leave out soldiering poems, since they are concerned with intense and unnatural work which remove them from the sphere of 'honest labour'.

Of the great bulk of gild poems, which cover four centuries, only three have been included. Their literary merit is not high, but I could not bring myself entirely to omit them. These gild poems are all much alike. The theme is the same, the glorification of the gild; the variations occur in proving it to be either the oldest, or the richest, or the most distinguished. In striving to attain some particular excellence there are extravagances of the following kind. The Tailor thus tells the story of his origin:

> When God made man and woman to him joined,
> He Eden's garden to them both resigned,
> Of innocence they bore an equal share,
> And felt no cold although they naked were.

Then came the Fall, and Adam's part is described:

> His innocence took flight and then he knew
> That he was naked and his helpmate too.
> Then straight they sewed fig-leaves and aprons made
> To cover them, and thus began the trade.
> What other trade can so transparent shine
> Since derovated from a hand divine?

The Ploughman, in his song, proclaims that Adam was a ploughman, and so the competition continues. The Brewer goes off on a line of his own:

> With envy every other trade must own
> We are the immediate servants of the crown;
> For without taxes laid on humming Ale,
> Our soldiers could not fight, our castles sail.

Combined with praise of one, frequently another gild receives much abuse. The Tailor, who was a very superior person, came in for a good deal of this. The Weaver is of the opinion:

Likewise the nimble taylor,
who boasts him such a man,
If it was not for the weavers
he might lick the dripping pan.

The Shoemaker is more fiercely denunciatory :

Cats they are cunning in catching of mice,
But Taylors are tyrants in killing of lice.

The Baker grows pious in his attack :

Prayer, Good Lord deliver us from evil,
And send these taylors to the Devil.

Gild poems, then, are not without interest in this collection ; but on the whole they have little or no literary merit, and they conform so much to type that to print many would be vain repetition.

Finally, the only translation included is the opening poem of the Creation. This I could not resist. To include translations in general, however, would have taken me too far afield, and it would have been impossible to do them justice. In all countries folk-lore is concerned not a little with labour, but to embark upon foreign folk poems dealing with labour without years of research would be of little value.

Every anthologist is compelled, by the exigencies of his business, to practise the delicate and dubious art of serving two masters—literature and his theme. He must do justice to his subject without outrage to his literary conscience. The obligation weighs the more heavily when, as in the present volume, pioneer work is attempted. In an anthology which is, whatever its defects, so far as I know the first of its kind, it is imperative that the poems chosen should be as representative as possible ; and such an aim necessarily involves the inclusion of a few pieces of small intrinsic merit. In general, however, literary excellence has been the compiler's chief concern.

Except for the somewhat miscellaneous group headed 'Description', the poems fell naturally into the groups in which they are arranged. It does not seem necessary to say more about them since they speak for themselves eloquently enough.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. J. C. Squire and Mr. Edward Davison for many valuable suggestions.

To those modern authors and publishers without whose kind co-operation this book could not have been made, grateful acknowledgments are due.

Mr. Wilfred Meynell for *To a Snowflake* and *The Making of Viola* by Francis Thompson, and for *The Threshing Machine* by Alice Meynell.

Mr. Robert Bridges and Mr. John Murray for *I love all Beauteous Things* and two sonnets from *The Growth of Love*.

Sir Ronald Ross and Mr. John Murray for *Reply* from *Philosophies*.

Mr. Walter de la Mare and Messrs. Constable & Co. Ltd. for *The Scribe*, *The Tailor* and *Idleness* from *Poems* 1901-1918; and Mr. de la Mare and Messrs. Selwyn & Blount Ltd. for two epitaphs from *Ding Dong Bell*.

Mr. E. V. Lucas for *The Ploughman* and *The Shipbuilder*, from *Another Book of Verses for Children*, published by Messrs. Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co. Ltd.

Mr. Harold Monro and The Poetry Bookshop for *Man Carrying Bale*.

Mr. Edmund Blunden and Mr. R. Cobden Sanderson for *Molecatcher* from *The Shepherd*; and Mr. Edmund Blunden and Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd. for *The Waggoner* from *The Waggoner and other Poems*.

Mrs. Sylvia Lynd and Mr. R. Cobden-Sanderson for *The Mower* from *The Goldfinches*.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling and the Delegates of the Clarendon Press for *The Secret of the Machines* from *The History of England*.

Mr. Louis Untermeyer for *Portrait of a Machine* and *Steel Mill*.

Mr. Frank Kendon and Messrs. John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., for *The Crane in Bloomsbury* from *Arguments and Emblems*.

The Trustees of the late William Morris and Messrs. Longman, Green & Co. for *Tapestry Trees*, *The Flowering Orchard*, and *The Harvest* from *Poems by the Way*; and *Song after Labour* from *The Earthly Paradise*.

Mr. John Masefield and Messrs. Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd. for *The Plough* from *The Everlasting Mercy*.

Mr. W. W. Gibson and Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. for *Unity*, *The Sacrifice* and *The Disaster* from *I Heard a Sailor*, and *The Plough* from *Livelihood*.

Mr. Robert Frost and Messrs. William Heinemann Ltd. for *The Line Gang* and *After Apple Picking* from *Selected Poems*.

Mr. Claude Colleer Abbott for *Harvest-End*, *Stallion* and *Hedges* from *Miss Bedells and Other Poems* published by Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

Mr. W. H. Davies and Messrs. Jonathan Cape Ltd. for *Leisure* and *A Great Time*.

Mr. Siegfried Sassoon for *Everyone Sang*.

Mr. Thomas Hardy and Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. for *The Old Workman*, *The Church Builder*, and *The Young Glass-Stainer* from *Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*.

Mr. Edwin Markham for *The Man with the Hoe*.

Mr. John Gould Fletcher for *The Sower* and *Coal*.

Mr. Laurence Binyon and Messrs. William Heinemann Ltd. for *The Builder*.

Mr. Kenneth Ashley and Messrs. John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., for *The Plough Team Talks* and *Out of Work* from *Up Hill and Down Dale*.

Miss V. Sackville-West for *Making Cider*.

Finally I must thank Mr. T. Michael Pope for his very careful reading of the proofs and many valuable suggestions.

DOROTHY WOOLDRIDGE

CHELSEA, *September*, 1926

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CREATION

The Creation

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light : and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good : and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament : and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear : and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth ; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas : and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth : and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind : and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night ; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years : and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth : and it was so. And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night : he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness : and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind : and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind : and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind : and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them. And God

blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The Tiger

TIGER, Tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes ?
On what wings dare he aspire ?
What the hand dare seize the fire ?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart ?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet ?

What the hammer ? what the chain ?
In what furnace was thy brain ?
What the anvil ? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp ?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see ?
Did he who made the lamb make thee ?

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry ?

To a Snowflake

WHAT heart could have thought you ?—
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal !),
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost ?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapour ?—
' God was my shaper,
Passing surmisal,
He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapour,
To lust of His mind :—
Thou could'st not have thought me !
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind
And His graver of frost.'

The Making of Viola

I

The Father of Heaven :

Spin, daughter Mary, spin,
Twirl your wheel with silver din
Spin, daughter Mary, spin,
Spin a tress for Viola.

Angels :

Spin, Queen Mary, a
Brown tress for Viola !

II

The Father of Heaven :

Weave, hands angelical,
Weave a woof of flesh to pall—
Weave, hands angelical—
Flesh to pall our Viola.

Angels :

Weave, singing brothers, a
Velvet flesh for Viola !

III

The Father of Heaven :

Scoop, young Jesus, for her eyes,
Wood-browned pools of Paradise—
Young Jesus, for the eyes,
For the eyes of Viola !

Angels :

Tint, Prince Jesus, a
Dusked eye for Viola !

IV

The Father of Heaven :

Cast a star therein to drown,
Like a torch in cavern brown,
Sink a burning star to drown
Whelmed in eyes of Viola.

Angels :

Lave, Prince Jesus, a
Star in eyes of Viola !

V

The Father of Heaven :

Breathe, Lord Paraclete,
To a bubbled crystal meet—
Breathe, Lord Paraclete—
Crystal soul for Viola.

Angels :

Breathe, Regal Spirit, a
Flashing soul for Viola.

VI

The Father of Heaven :

Child angels, from your wings
Fall the roseal hoverings,
Child angels, from your wings
On the cheeks of Viola.

Angels:

Linger, rosy reflex, a
Quenchless stain on Viola !

VII

All things being accomplished, saith the Father of Heaven :

Bear her down, and bearing sing,
Bear her down on spyless wing,
Bear her down, and bearing sing,
With a sound of viola.

Angels:

Music as her name is, a
Sweet sound of Viola !

VIII

Wheeling angels, past espial,
Danced her down with sound of viol ;
Wheeling angels, past espial,
Descanting on ' Viola ! '

Angels:

Sing in our footing, a
Lovely lilt of ' Viola ! '

IX

Baby smiled, mother wailed,
Earthward while the sweeting sailed ;
Mother smiled, baby wailed,
When to earth came Viola.

And her elders shall say :

So soon have we taught you a
Way to weep, poor Viola !

X

Smile, sweet baby, smile,
For you will have weeping while ;
Native in your heaven is smile,—
But your weeping, Viola ?

Whence your smiles, we know, but ah !
Whence your weeping, Viola ?
Our first gift to you is a
Gift of tears, my Viola.

I Love all Beauteous Things

I LOVE all beauteous things,
I seek and adore them ;
God hath no better praise,
And man in his hasty days
Is honoured for them.

I too will something make
And joy in the making ;
Altho' to-morrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking.

The Scribe

WHAT lovely things
Thy hand hath made,
The smooth-plumed bird
In its emerald shade,
The seed of the grass,
The speck of stone
Which the wayfaring ant
Stirs, and hastes on.

Though I should sit
By some tarn in Thy hills,
Using its ink
As the spirit wills
To write of Earth's wonders
Its live willed things,
Flit would the ages
On soundless wings
Ere unto Z
My pen drew nigh,
Leviathan told,
And the honey-fly ;
And still would remain
My wit to try—
My worn reeds broken,
The dark tarn dry,
All words forgotten—
Thou, Lord, and I.

MEN

The Clerk

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logik hadde long y-go.
As lene was his horse as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake ;
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
Ful thredbare was his overest coutepy ;
For he had geten him yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office.
For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twenty bokes, cladde in blak or rede,
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes rich, or fithele, or gay sauntrye.
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet had he but litel gold in coffre ;
But al that he might of his friends hente,
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie tok he most cure and most hede,
Noght a word spoke he more than was nede,
And that was said in form and reverence,
And short and quik, and full of hy sentence.
Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

The Persoun and the Plowman

A GOOD man was ther of religion,
And was a poore Persoun of the towne ;
But riche he was of holy thought and work.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche ;
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient ;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doubt,
Unto his poore parisshens aboute
Of his offring, and eke of his substaunce.
He coude in litel thing have suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sunder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thunder,
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, much and lyte,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,
That first he wroughte, and afterwarde he taughte ;
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte ;
And this figure he added eek thereto,
What if gold rust, what shall iren do ?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste ;
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
A shiten shepherd and a clene sheep.
Wel ought a preest ensample for to give,
By his clennesse, how that his sheep should live.

He sette nat his benfice to hire,
And leet his sheep encombred in the mire,
And ran to London, unto seynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde ;
But dwelte at hoom, and kept wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie ;
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful man not despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his teching discreet and benigne.
To drawen folk to heaven by fairnesse
By good ensample, was his bisinesse :
But it wer any person obstinat,
Whatso he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it himselfe.

With him there was a Plowman, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,
A trewe swinker and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and perfit charity.
God loved he best with all his hole herte
At alle tymes, though him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighbour right as himselve.
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.
His tythes paid he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

The Carter

I ONCE was a bold fellow and went with a team,
And all my delight was a-keeping them clean,
With bushes and curries I'd show their bright colour,
And the name that they gave me was ' a hearty good fellow.'

As every evening I go to my bed,
The thought of my horses comes into my head,
I will rise the next morning to give them some meat,
As soon as I can get my shoes on my feet.

The first was a white horse, as white as the milk,
The next was a grey horse, as grey as the silk ;
The next was a black horse, as sleek as a mole,
The next was a brown horse, like diamonds did show.

As I go a-driving all on the highway,
When light goes my load, then I feed them with hay ;
And give them some water when we come to a pond,
And after they've drunk, boys, go steady along.

My feet they grow weary walking by their side ;
I said to my mate, ' I will get up and ride,'
And, as I was riding I made a new song,
And as I did sing it you must learnt it a-long.

The Mole Catcher

A MOLE-CATCHER am I, and that is my trade,
I potters about wi' my spunt and my spade,
On a moonshiny night, O 'tis my delight
A-catching o' moles.

The traps that I set for the mole in his run,
There's never a night, sirs, but I catches one.

Along of the lanes as by night time I go,
There's things that I see, as the folks don't know.

There's frolic and lark in the field and the park,
For others than moles will be out in the dark.

There's many a sight and there's many a sound
What maketh me laugh as I'm making my round.

But nothing I says, for I'm mum as a bell,
You certainly know that no tales will I tell,
On a moonshiny night, O 'tis my delight
A-catching o' moles,
Not human souls.

The Chimney Sweep

Oh ! sweep chimney, sweep !
You maidens shake off sleep
If you my cry can follow.
I climb the chimney top,
Without ladder, without rope ;
Aye and there ! aye and there ! aye and there you shall hear my halloo !

Arise ! maids, arise !
Unseal and rub your eyes,
Arise and do your duty.
I summon yet again
And do not me disdain,
That my call, that my call, that my calling's poor and sooty.

Behold ! here I stand !
With brush and scrape in hand,
As a soldier that stands on his sentry.
I work for the better sort,
And well they pay me for't.
O I work, O I work, O I work for the best of gentry.

Oh ! sweep chimney, sweep !
The hours onward creep.
As the lark I am alert, I
Clear away, and take
The smut that others make.
O I clean, O I clean, O I clean what others dirty.

The Mountebank's Song

COME, will you buy ? for I have here
The rarest gums that ever were ;
Gold is but dross, and features dye,
Else Aesculapius tells a lie.
But I—
Come, will you buy ?—
Have medicines for that malady.

Is there a lady in this place,
Would not be marked, but for her face ?
Oh, do not blush, for here is that
Will make your pale cheeks plump and fat.
Then why
Should I thus cry,
And none a scruple of me buy ?

A Poore Ploughman to a Gentleman for whom he had taken a little pains

Your Culter cuts the soyle that erst was sowne,
Your Harvest was forereaped long agoe,
Your Sickle shears the meadow that was mowne,
Ere you the toyle of Tilmans trade did know :
Good fayth you are beholding to the man
That so for you your husbandrie began.

He craves of you no Silver for his Seede,
Ne doth demand a penny for his Graine,
But if you stande at any time in neede,
(Good Mayster) be as bold with him again,
You cannot do a greater pleasure than
To choose you such a one to be your man.

The Modest Piper

Of muses, Hobbinoll, I conne no skill,
For they bene daughters of the highest Jove,
And helden scorne of homely shepheards' quill;
For sith I heard that Pan with Phœbus strove,
Which him to much rebuke and danger drove,
I never list presume to Parnasse Hill,
But pyping low in shade of lowly grove,
I play to please myselfe, all be it ill.

On the University Carrier

who sickn'd in the time of his vacancy, being forbid to go to London, by reason of the Plague

HERE lies old Hobson, Death hath broke his girt,
And here alas, hath laid him in the dirt,
Or els the ways being foul, twenty to one,
He's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.
'Twas such a shifter, that if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down ;
For he had any time this ten yeers full,
Dodg'd with him, betwixt Cambridge and the Bull.
And surely, Death could never have prevail'd,
Had not his weekly cours of carriage fail'd ;
But lately finding him so long at home,
And thinking now his journey's end was come,
And that he had tane up his latest Inne,
In the kind office of a Chamberlin
Shew'd him his room where he must lodge that night,
Pull'd off his boots, and took away the light :
If any ask of him, it shall be sed,
Hobson has supt, and's newly gon to bed.

Upon a Giant's Angling

His angle-rod made of sturdy oak,
His line a cable, which in storms n'er broke,
His hook he baited with a dragon's tail,
And sate upon a rock, and bobb'd for whale.

The Lawyer

A FOX may steal your hens, Sir,
A trull your health and pence, Sir,
Your daughter may rob your chest, Sir,
Your wife may steal your rest, Sir,
A thief your goods and plate.

But this is all but picking,
With rest, pence, chest, and chicken ;
It ever was decreed, Sir,
If Lawyer's hand is fee'd, Sir,
He steals your whole estate.

The Solitary Reaper

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listen'd motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

The Farmer's Boy

He waits all day beside his little flock
And asks the passing stranger what's o'clock,
But those who often pass his daily tasks
Look at their watch and tell before he asks.
He mutters stories to himself and lies
Where the thick hedge the warmest house supplies,
And when he hears the hunters far and wide
He climbs the highest tree to see them ride—
He climbs till all the fields are blea and bare
And makes the old crow's nest an easy chair.
And soon his sheep are got in other grounds—
He hastens down and fears his master come,
He stops the gaps and keeps them all in bounds
And tends them closely till it's time for home.

The Foddering Boy

THE foddering boy along the crumping snows
With straw-band-belted legs and folded arm
Hastens, and on the blast that keenly blows
Oft turns for breath, and beats his fingers warm,
And shakes the lodging snows from off his clothes,
Buttoning his doublet closer from the storm
And slouching his brown beaver o'er his nose—
Then faces it agen, and seeks the stack
Within its circling fence where hungry lows
Expecting cattle, making many a track
About the snow, impatient for the sound
When in huge forkfulls trailing at his back
He litters the sweet hay about the ground
And brawls to call the staring cattle round.

Market Day

With arms and legs at work and gentle stroke
That urges switching tail nor mends his pace,
On an old ribbed and weather-beaten horse,
The farmer goes jogtrotting to the fair.
Both keep their pace that nothing can provoke,
Followed by brindled dog that snuffs the ground
With urging bark and hurries at his heels.
His hat slouched down, and great coat buttoned close,
Bellied like hooped keg, and chuffy face
Red as the morning sun, he takes his round
And talks of stock : and when his jobs are done
And Dobbin's hay is eaten from the rack,
He drinks success to corn in language hoarse,
And claps old Dobbin's hide, and potters back.

The Milk Maid o' the Farm

O Poll's the milk maïd o' the farm !
An' Poll's so happy out in groun'
Wi' her white païl below her eärm
As if she wore a goolden crown.

An' Poll don't zit up half the night,
Nor lie vor half the day a-bed :
An' zoo her eyes be sparklèn bright,
An' zoo her cheäks be bloomèn red.

In zummer mornèns, when the lark
Do rouse the litty lad and lass
To work, then she's the vu'st to mark
Her steps upon the dewy grass.

An' in the evenèn, when the zun
Do sheen upon the western brows
O' hills, where bubblèn brooks do run,
There she do zing bezide her cows.

An' ev'ry cow of hers do stand
An' never overzet the païl,
Nor try to kick her nimble hand,
Nor switch her wi' her heavy taïl.

Noo leädy wi' her muff and vaïl
Do walk wi' such a steately tread
As she do, wi' her milkèn païl
A-balanced on her comely head.

An' she at mornèn an' at night
  Do skim the yollow cream, an' mwold
An' wring her cheeses red an' white,
  An' zee the butter vetch'd an' roll'd.

An' in the barkèn or the ground,
  The chaps do always do their best
To milk the vu'st their own cows round,
  An' then help her to milk the rest.

Zoo Poll's the milk maïd o' the farm !
  An' Poll's so happy out in groun'
Wi' her white païl below her eärm
  As if she wore a goolden crown.

The Shepherd o' the Farm

Oh ! I be shepherd o' the farm,
Wi' tinklèn bells an' sheep-dog's bark,
An' wi' my crook a-thirt my eärm,
Here I do rove below the lark.

An' I do bide all day among
The bleäten sheep, an' pitch their vwold ;
An' when the evenen sheädes be long,
So zee em all a-penned an' twold.

An' I do see the friskèn lam's,
Wi' swingèn taïls an' wooly lags,
A-playèn roun' their veedèn dams,
An' pullèn o' their milky bags.

An' I bezide a hawthorn tree,
Do zit upon the zunny down,
While sheädes o' zummer clouds do vlee
Wi' silent flight along the groun'.

An' there, among the many cries
O' sheep an' lambs, my dog do pass
A zultry hour, wi' blinkèn eyes,
An' nose a-strach'd upon the grass ;

But, in a twinklèn, at my word,
He's all awake, an' up, an' gone
Out roun' the sheep lik' any bird,
To do what he's a-zent upon.

An' I do go to washèn pool,
A-sousèn over head an' ears
The shaggy sheep, to cleän their wool
An' meäke them ready for the sheärs.

An' when the shearèn time do come,
Then we do work from dawn till dark ;
Zome shearèn o' the sheep, and zome
A-markèn o'm wi' meäster's mark.

An' when the shearèn's all a-done,
Then we do eat, an' drink, an' zing,
In meäster's kitchen till the tun
Wi' merry sounds do sheäke an' ring.

Oh ! I be shepherd o' the farm,
Wi' tinklèn bells an' sheep-dog's bark,
An' wi' my crook a-thirt my eärm
Here I do rove below the lark.

The Ox-Tamer

In a far away northern county in the placid pastoral region,
Lives my farmer friend, the theme of my recitative, a famous tamer of oxen,
There they bring him the three-year-olds and the four-year-olds to break them.
He will take the wildest steer in the world and break him and tame him.
He will go fearless without any whip where the young bullock chafes up and down the yard,
The bullock's head tosses restless high in the air with raging eyes.
Yet see you! how soon his rage subsides—how soon this tamer tames him;
See you! on the farms hereabout a hundred oxen young and old, and he is the man who has tamed them,
They all know him, all are affectionate to him;
See you! some are such beautiful animals, so lofty looking;
Some are buff-color'd, some mottled, one has a white line running along his back, some are brindled,
Some have wide flaring horns (a good sign)—see you! the bright hides,
See, the two with stars on their foreheads—see, the round bodies and broad backs,
How straight and square they stand on their legs—what fine sagacious eyes!
How they watch their tamer—they wish him near them—how they turn to look after him!

What yearning expression ! how uneasy they are when
he moves away from them ;
Now I marvel what it can be he appears to them, (books,
politics, poems, depart—all else departs,)
I confess I envy only his fascination—my silent
illiterate friend,
Whom a hundred oxen love there in his life on farms,
In the northern county far, in the placid pastoral
region.

A Grammarian's Funeral

Shortly after the Revival of Learning in Europe

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared for till cock-crow :
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row !
That's the appropriate country ; there man's thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop ;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture !
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels ;
Clouds overcome it ;
No ! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies ; wind we up the heights :
Wait ye the warning ?
Our low life was the level's and the night's ;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
'Ware the beholders !
This is our master, famous calm and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd ! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,
Safe from the weather !
He, whom we convey to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo !
Long he lived nameless ; how should spring take note
Winter would follow ?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone !
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, ' New measures, other feet anon !
My dance is finished ? '
No, that's the world's way : (keep the mountain-side,
Make for the city !)
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
Over men's pity ;
Left play for work, and grappled with the world
Bent on escaping :
'What's in the scroll,' quoth he, ' thou keepest furled ?
Show me their shaping,
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—
Give ! '—So, he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last page :
Learned, we found him.
Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
Accents uncertain :
' Time to taste life,' another would have said,
' Up with the curtain ! '
This man said rather, ' Actual life comes next ?
Patience a moment !
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
Still there's the comment.
Let me know all ! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy !
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
Ay, nor feel queasy.'

Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts—
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick! . . .

(Here's the town-gate reached: there's the market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
That before living he'd learn how to live—
No end to learning:
Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
Use for our earning.
Others mistrust and say, 'But time escapes:
Live now or never!'
He said, 'What's Time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever.'
Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head:
Calculus racked him:
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:
Tussis attacked him.
'Now, master, take a little rest!'—not he!
(Caution redoubled,
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
Not a whit troubled
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon. . . .
So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;

Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech were rife :
While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be !—
Properly based *Oun*—
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place :
Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews !
Here's the top-peak ; the multitude below
Live, for they can, there :
This man decided not to Live but Know—
Bury this man there ?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go ! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send !
Lofty designs must close in like effects :
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.

The Ploughman

On winter mornings when the air is still
The Ploughman's cries come floating down the hill,
Ge-e-e-e Up ! Ge-e-e-e Whoa !
The selfsame sharp and throaty cries are they—
The teamsters used in Julius Caesar's day—
Ge-e-e-e Up ! Ge-e-e-e Whoa !

Nothing is changed, since tillage first began
The same brown earth has yielded food to man.

Nothing is changed—save ploughman, team and share :
A thousand furrows have been made just there ;

And every time, with cautious sidelong looks,
Have followed, close behind, the hungry rooks.

And every time the team was kept in hand
By those two potent phrases of command—
Ge-e-e-e Up ! Ge-e-e-e Whoa !
Which every horse on earth can understand
From Christiana to Van Diemen's Land,
Ge-e-e-e Up ! Ge-e-e-e Whoa !

The Shipbuilder

Such noise is in a shipwright's yard
When everyone is working hard.

Good oak is falling everywhere :
Hark how the saws its fibres tear !

The planks scream out beneath the planes,
The knots endure terrific pains.

The air is throbbing with the din
As nail on nail is hammered in.

With every nail that's driven home
The ship is nearer to the foam.

' Then haste ! then haste ! Ply, hammers, ply ! '
Impatiently the wavelets cry :

' The ship is ours to bear in glee
From port to port across the sea !

' Make haste ! make haste ! We're waiting now :
We long to crisp around her prow.

' Plant deep her mast, sew well her sails,
Against our stiff October gales.

' And, shipwright, sturdy make her form,
Against the dark December storm ! '

The Tailor

Few footsteps stray when dusk droops o'er
The tailor's old stone-lintelled door.
There sits he, stitching, half asleep,
Beside his smoky tallow dip.
' Click, click,' his needle hastes, and shrill
Cries back the cricket beneath the sill.
Sometimes he stays, and over his thread
Leans sidelong his old tousled head ;
Or stoops to peer with half-shut eye
When some strange footfall echoes by ;
Till clearer gleams his candle's spark
Into the dusty summer dark.
Then from his crosslegs he gets down,
To find how dark the evening is grown ;
And hunched-up in his door he will hear
The cricket whistling crisp and clear ;
And so beneath the starry grey
He will mutter half a seam away.

Epitaph on a Shepherd

A Shepherd, Ned Vaughan,
'Neath this Tombstone do bide,
His Crook in his hand,
And his Dog him beside.
Bleak and cold fell the Snow
On Marchmallysdon Steep,
And folded both sheepdog
And Shepherd in Sleep.

Epitaph on a Sexton

HERE be the ashes of Jacob Todd,
Sexton now in the land of Nod.
Digging he lived, and digging died,
Pick, mattock, spade, and nought beside.
Here oft at evening he would sit
Tired with his toil, and proud of it;
Watching the pretty Robins flit.
Now slumbers he as deep as they
He bedded for y^e^ Judgement Day.

Man Carrying Bale

THE tough hand closes gently on the load ;
Out of the mind, a voice
Calls ' Lift ! ' and the arms, remembering well their work,
Lengthen and pause for help.
Then a slow ripple flows from head to foot
While all the muscles call to one another :
' Lift ! ' and the bulging bale
Floats like a butterfly in June.

So moved the earliest carrier of bales,
And the same watchful sun
Glowed through his body feeding it with light.
So will the last one move,
And halt, and dip his head, and lay his load
Down, and the muscles will relax and tremble.
Earth, you designed your man
Beautiful both in labour and repose.

The Mower

THE rooks travelled home,
The milch cows went lowing,
And down in the meadow,
An old man was mowing.

His shirt rank with sweat,
His neck stained with grime ;
But he moved like the cadence
And sweetness of rhyme.

He moved like the heavy-winged
Rooks, the slow cows,
He moved like the vane
On the roof of the house.

The foam of the daisies
Was spread like a sea,
The spikes of red sorrel
Came up past his knee.

The sorrel, the clover,
The buttercups gold—
A man that was dirty
And twisted and old—

But again and again
Like an eddy he was,
He moved like the wind
In his own tasselled grass.

Mole Catcher

With coat like any mole's, as soft and black,
And hazel boughs bundled beneath his arm,
And long-helved spade and rush bag on his back
The trapper plods alone about the farm
And spies new mounds in the ripe pasture-land,
And where the lob-worms writhe up in alarm
And easy sinks the spade, he takes his stand
Knowing the mole's dark highroad runs below :
Then sharp and square he chops the turf, and day
Gloats on the opened turnpike through the clay.

Out from his wallet hurry pin and prong,
And trap, and noose to tie it to the bow ;
And then his grand arcanum, oily and strong,
Found out by his forefather years ago
To scent the peg and witch the moles along.
The bow is earthed and arched ready to shoot
And snatch the death-knot fast round the first mole
Who comes and snuffs well pleased and tries to root
Past the sly nose peg ; back again is put
The mould, and death left smirking in the hole.
The old man goes and tallies all his snares
And finds the prisoners there and takes his toll.

And moles to him are only moles ; but hares
See him afield and scarcely cease to nip
Their dinners, for he harms not them ; he spares
The drowning fly that of his ale would sip
And throws the ant the crumbs of comradeship.
And every time he comes into his yard

Grey linnet knows he brings the groundsel sheaf
And clatters round the cage to be unbarred
And on his finger whistles twice as hard.—
What his old vicar says, is his belief,
In the side pew he sits and hears the truth
And never misses once to ring his bell
On Sundays night and morn, nor once since youth
Has heard the chimes afield, but has heard tell
There's not a peal in England sounds so well.

The Waggoner

The old waggoner trudges through the miry lane
By the skulking pond where the pollards frown,
Notched, dumb, surly images of pain ;
On a dulled earth the night droops down.

Wincing to slow and wistful airs
The leaves on the shrubbed oaks know their hour,
And the unknown wandering spoiler bares
The thorned black hedge of a mournful shower.

Small bodies fluster in the dead brown wrack
As the stumbling shaft-horse jingles past,
And the waggoner slicks his whip a crack :
The odd light flares on shadows vast

Over the lodges and oasts and byres
Of the darkened farm ; the moment hangs wan
As though all nature flagged and all desires.
But in the dim court the ghost is gone

From the hug-secret yew to the penthouse wall,
And stooping there seems to listen to
The waggoner leading the gray to stall,
As centuries past itself would do.

MACHINES

The Threshing Machine

No ' fan is in his hand ' for these
Young villagers beneath the trees,
  Watching the wheels. But I recall
  The rhythm of rods that rise and fall,
Purging the harvest, over-seas.

No fan, no flail, no threshing floor !
And all their symbols evermore
  Foregone in England now—the sign,
  The visible pledge, the threat divine,
The chaff dispersed, the wheat in store.

The unbreathing engine marks no tune,
Steady at sunrise, steady at noon,
  Inhuman, perfect, saving time,
  And saving measure, and saving rhyme—
And did our Ruskin speak too soon ?

' No noble strength on earth ' he sees
' Save Hercules' arm ' ; his grave decrees
  Curse wheel and steam. As the wheels ran
  I saw the other strength of man,
I knew the brain of Hercules.

The Secret of the Machines

(*Modern Machinery*)

We were taken from the ore-bed and the mine,
We were melted in the furnace and the pit—
We were cast and wrought and hammered to design,
We were cut and filed and tooled and gauged to fit :
Some water, coal, and oil is all we ask,
And a thousandth of an inch to give us play :
And now if you will set us to our task,
We will serve you four and twenty hours a day !

We can pull and haul and push and lift and drive,
We can print and plough and weave and heat and light,
We can run and jump and swim and fly and dive,
We can see and hear and count and read and write.

Would you call a friend from half across the world ?
If you'll let us have his name and town and state,
You shall see and hear your crackling question hurled
Across the arch of heaven while you wait.
Has he answered ? Does he need you at his side ?
You can start this very evening if you choose,
And take the Western Ocean in the stride
Of seventy thousand horses and some screws !

The boat express is waiting your command !
You will find the *Mauretania* at the quay,
Till her captain turns the lever 'neath his hand,
And the monstrous nine-decked city goes to sea.

Do you wish to make the mountains bare their head
And lay their new cut tresses at your feet ?
Do you want to turn a river in its bed,
Or plant a barren wilderness with wheat ?
Shall we pipe aloft and bring you water down
From the never failing cisterns of the snows,
To work the mills and tramways in your town,
And irrigate your orchards as it flows ?

It is easy ! Give us dynamite and drills !
Watch the iron-shouldered rocks lie down and quake
As the thirsty desert-level floods and fills,
And the valley we have dammed becomes a lake !

But remember, please, the law by which we live.
We are not built to comprehend a lie.
We can neither love nor pity nor forgive.
If you make a slip in handling us you die !
We are greater than the Peoples or the Kings—
Be humble as you crawl beneath our rods !—
Our touch can alter all created things,
We are everything on earth—except The Gods !

Though our smoke may hide the Heavens from your eyes,
It will vanish and the stars will shine again,
Because for all our power and weight and size,—
We are nothing more than children of your brain !

Portrait of a Machine

WHAT nudity is beautiful as this
Obedient monster purring at its toil ;
These naked iron muscles dripping oil
And the sure-fingered rods that never miss ?
This long and shining flank of metal is
Magic that greasy labour cannot spoil ;
While this vast engine that could rend the soil
Conceals its fury with a gentle hiss.

It does not vent its loathing, does not turn
Upon its makers with destroying hate.
It bears a deeper malice ; lives to earn
Its master's bread and laughs to see this great
Lord of the earth, who rules but cannot learn
Become the slave of what his slaves create.

Steel Mill

The core of him is hate.
Down in his stones he waits and growls for war.
His iron bones strain to destroy ; his bowels
Are grinding steel that crush the maggots he contains.
His fires are rushing anger.
Every churning wheel,
Fed and well-greased with blood,
Turns with a redder purpose—
Released through passion to create
Fresh agonies of hate.

Thrusting his back against the night,
He cracks the full moon into splintered glass
And crusts of winter-bitten ponds.
Timidly clustered houses sleep
Deep in their bonds of silence.
He howls to see small hours pass
And roars dark blasphemies into their ears.
He calls to his coarse brood,
Spitting lewd sparks upon the bleeding dawn
That lifts its head, unheeding,
Christ-like, compassionate.

Hating the light of peace, now that the stars are dead.
His chimneys throw their bars against the east.
Daylight plows through them.
Roused by the clamour,
Naked, new,
The sun,
Answering hate with heat,

Beats his great hammer on the smoking back.
Morning. Fresh fires. Attack.
Up go black arms tearing apart the sky !

Down swarms a heaven of flaring motes
Exploding into laughter !
Up go the shafts of fear and hatred !
Down fly the spears of love !
The battle never clears.
The rhythm has no ending.
Conflict. Consent.
Death at life's core.
Rising. Rending.
War ! War !

Unity

WHEN the cooling tyre contracts
Round the felloe of the wheel,
Do not spokes that once were boughs
In close-knitting fibres feel
A glow in being ironbound
In unity secure and round
For conquest of untravelled ground ?

The Crane in Bloomsbury

Man's God to see, backwards I bent my head
Like any saint intent upon his vision.
There, dark against the clouds, the monster raised
Colossal arms, and moved with slow decision
Half over heaven. Yet no one seemed amazed,
No one fell prostrate, worshipping his power,
But midget men, commanding, while I gazed
Waved their weak arms, and brought the god's arms lower.

Roared all around me motor evidence
Of our assault upon life's brevity.
Men hurried on as though Death was at their heels,
And would not leave their thoughts alone, lest he
Should gain upon them. So they rushed on wheels
From door to door, filling the moments out
With twice each moment's labour—though there steals
Behind such haste, alas ! a heavier doubt—

And from the ground an exhalation came,
Even in the breath of stone and iron streets—
The breath of Autumn, earthy from the leaves
Fallen beneath the trees—such breath as meets
An idle harvester when all the sheaves
Are carried, or some ploughboy wandering home,
Who, missing the late swallows from his eaves,
In darkening silence listens, and is dumb.

DESCRIPTION

The Ploughman's Charm

Here is the remedy how thou mayest cure thy land if it refuses to bear, or if aught untoward hath befallen it by way of witchcraft or sorcery. Strew seed on the body of the plough and repeat these words :—

Erce, Erce, Erce, Mother of Earth,
May the Almighty Lord Everlasting,
Grant thee fields, green and fertile,
Grant thee fields, fruitful and growing,
Hosts of Spear-shafts, shining harvests,
  Harvest of Barley the broad,
  Harvest of Wheat the white,
All the heaping harvests of earth !
May the Almighty Lord Everlasting,
And his holy saints in heaven above,
From fiend and foe defend this land,
Keep it from blight and coming of harm,
From spell of witches wickedly spread !
Now I pray the Almighty who made this world,
That malice of man, or mouth of woman
Never may weaken the words I have spoken.

Start the plough, and when the first furrow is turned, say :—

Hail to thee Earth, Mother of Men !
Grow and be great in God's embrace,
Filled with fruit for the food of men !

Knead a loaf of bread with milk and holy water, lay it under the first furrow and say :—

Field be full of food for men,
Blossom bright, for blessed thou art

In the name of the Holy who made the Heavens,
Created the earth whereon we live.
God who gavest this ground
Grant us growth and increase,
Let each seed that is sown, sprout and be useful.

One Man Shall Mow my Meadow

One man shall mow my meadow,
Two men shall gather it together,
Two men, one man, and one more
Shall shear my lambs and ewes and rams
And gather my gold together.

Saweste Not You my Oxen

I HAVE twelfe oxen, that be faire and brown,
And they go a-grasing down by the town.
With hey ! with how ! with hey !
Saweste not you my oxen, you litill prety boy ?

I have twelfe oxen, and they be faire and white,
And they go a-grasing down by the dyke.
With hey ! with how ! with hey !
Saweste not you mine oxen, you litill prety boy ?

I have twelfe oxen, and they be faire and blak,
And they go a-grasing down by the lak.
With hey ! with how ! with hey !
Saweste not you mine oxen, you litill prety boy ?

I have twelfe oxen, and they be faire and rede,
And they go a-grasing down by the mede.
With hey ! with how ! with hey !
Saweste not you mine oxen, you litill prety boy ?

Chantey

Now Cape Clear it is in sight,
We'll be off Holyhead to-morrow night,
And we'll shape our course for the Rock Light ;
  O, Jenny, get your oat cake done.

Now my boys, we're off Holyhead,
No more salt beef, no more salt bread,
One man in the chains for to heave the lead ;
  O, Jenny, get your oat cake done.

Now my lads, we're round the Rock,
All hammocks lashed and chests all locked,
We'll haul her into the Waterloo Dock,
  O, Jenny, get your oat cake done.

Now, my lads, we're all in dock,
We'll be off to Dan Lowrie's on the spot ;
And now we'll have a good roundabout,
  O, Jenny, get your oat cake done.

The Praise of Saylors

As I lay musing in my bed,
full warm and well at ease,
I thought upon the lodgings hard
poor sailors had at seas.

They bide it out with hunger and cold,
and many a bitter blast,
And many times constrained they are
for to cut down their mast.

Their victuals and their ordnance,
and ought else that they have,
They throw it overboard with speed,
and seek their lives to save.

Whenas the raging seas do foam,
and lofty winds do blow,
The saylors they go up to the top
when landsmen stay below.

Our master's mate takes helm in hand,
his course he steers full well,
Whenas the lofty winds do blow
and raging seas do swell.

Our master to his compass goes,
so well he plies his charge,
He sends a youth unto the main
for to unsling the yards.

The boatson he's under the deck,
a man of courage bold,
To th' top, to th' top, my lively lads,
hold fast, my hearts of gold.

The pilot he stands on the chain,
with a line and lead to sound,
To see how far, and near they are,
from any dangerous ground.

It is a testimonial good,
we are not far from land,
There sits a mermaid on the rock
with comb and glass in hand.

Our captain he is on the poop,
a man of might and power,
And looks how raging seas do gape,
our bodies to devour.

Our royal ship is run to rack,
that was so stout and trim,
And some are put into their shifts
either to sink or swim.

Our ship that was so good before,
and eke likewise so trim,
Is now with raging seas grown leakt
and water fast comes in.

The quarter master is a man,
so well his charge plies he,
He calls them to the poop amain
to keep their leak'd ship free.

And many dangers likewise they
do many times endure

Whenas they meet their enemies
that come with might and power,

And seek their lives likewise to take
their lives and eke their goods ;
The Saylors they likewise endure
upon the surging floods.

But whenas they do come to land
and homewards do return,
They are most good fellows all,
and scorn ever to mourn.

God bless them all by land and sea,
and also other men,
And as my song beginning had,
so must it have an end.

The Painful Plough

COME all you jolly ploughmen of courage stout and bold,
That labour all the winter in stormy winds and cold ;
To clothe your fields with plenty, your farmyards to renew,
To crown them with contentment, behold the painful plough.

' Hold, ploughman,' says the gardener, ' don't count your trade with ours,
But walk through the garden and view the early flowers,
Also the curious border and pleasant walks to view,
There's no such peace and plenty provided by the plough.'

' Hold, gardener,' says the ploughman, ' my calling don't despise,
Since each man for his living upon his trade relies,
Were it not for the ploughman both rich and poor would rue,
For we are all dependent upon the painful plough.'

For Adam was a ploughman, when ploughing did begin,
The next that did succeed him was Cain the eldest son ;
Some of their generation this calling now pursue,
That bread may not be wanting, remains the painful plough.

Now Samson was a strong man and Solomon was wise,
Alexander for to conquer it was his daily pride ;

King David was a valiant man and many thousands slew,
Yet none of these brave heroes could live without the plough.

Behold the wealthy merchant that trades in foreign seas,
To bring the gold and treasure for those that live at ease ;
To bring fine silks and spices, to bring the fruits also.
They bring them from the Indies by virtue of the plough.

And then the man that brings them will own to what is true,
We cannot sail the ocean without the painful plough ;
For they must have bread, biscuits, rice-pudding, flour and peas,
To feed the jolly sailors as they sail o'er the seas.

I hope there's none offended with me for singing this,
For it was not intended for anything amiss ;
If you consider rightly you'll find what I say is true—
All trades that I have mentioned depend upon the plough.

On the Order of the Procession of Silk and Worsted Weavers

(Written by J. S., a Wellwisher to the Trade.)

I. The men in skins to show how they were clothed before weaving was known.

II. Men in their working apparel carrying banners.

III. The loom to shew that the quality of this kingdom may be furnish'd with any silk goods manufactured by the weavers of this nation.

Come all you jolly weavers,
come listen to my song,
To you above all others
these verses do belong ;
These lines do speak in praise
of a good sufficient trade,
They are very much blameworthy
who do the same degrade.
Now, who dare speak against them ?
in Country or in Town ;
If it was not for the weavers
your backs would all go bare,
Or else go all in leather
as your forefathers were.
From whence comes the rich apparel
which our fine gentry wear ?
Do not the handy weavers
fine cloth for them prepare ?
Your flowered silks and satins
and the richest cloth of gold,

The weavers they do work them,
so glorious to behold.
Your broadcloth and your kerseys,
and stuffs of every sort,
Which is most now in fashion
in Country and in Court :
First the ingenious weavers,
that did them all contrive
They are above all others,
the only men alive.
Your curious lawn and cambric,
which Kings and Princes wear,
Your finest costly muslins,
so praised everywhere,
You nimble handed weavers,
do weave them in your looms ;
They that speak against the weavers,
Let them receive their dooms.
Your finest coloured ribbons,
I'd have you for to know,
That in the Ladies Top-Knots,
do make so brave a show ;
They are all made by the weavers,
and therefore you shall see,
The weavers bear the bell away
of all the trades that be.
Your linen and your woollen,
that is our constant wear,
Is not of so great a value,
as I have named before,
But yet it is much fallen,
as every man does know,
And if there were no weavers,
alas ! what should we do ?
Nay, how should men and women
have shifts unto their backs ;

Or how should they have bed clothes
or other things they lack ?
Or how should they have garments
to hide their nakedness,
If there were no weavers
to weave new cloth for us ?
The workman and the dyer,
nay and the sheerman too,
And if there were no weavers,
alas ! what should they do ?
Likewise the nimble tailor
that boasts him such a man,
If it was not for the weavers
he might lick the dripping pan.
Who would not be a weaver
of all the trades that be ?
The gentle and the simple
of high and low degree,
Are obligèd to the weavers,
his vote goes on their side,
They are the poor man's comfort
and eke the rich man's pride.
It is no heavy labour,
they need not break their bones ;
They need not fear the weather
nor heat among their lambs ;
They neither care nor carry,
but in their looms they sing,
As merry and as pleasant
as birds do in the spring.
As for the jolly weavers
that lead a merry life,
Whilst others are entangled
in misery and strife,
For the money that they get
comes in unto them free ;

He fears not to be broken
as other tradesmen be.
Therefore ye Rigid Masters,
who do abuse these men,
I pray now have a caution,
and don't do so again ;
Bur range your pieces length and breadth,
due Wages to them give ;
And they will justly serve you
as long as they do live.

Winter

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-whit!
To-who!—a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-whit!
To-who!—a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Pedlar's Song

Lawn as white as driven snow ;
Cypress black as ere was crow ;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses ;
Masks for faces and for noses ;
Bugle-bracelet, necklace-amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber ;
Golden quoifs and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears ;
Pins and poking sticks of steel,
What maids lack from head to heel :
Come buy of me, come ; come buy, come buy;
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry :
Come buy.

New Brooms

New brooms, green brooms, will you buy any ?
Come, maidens, come quickly, let me take a penny.

My brooms are not steeped,
But very well bound :
My brooms be not crooked,
But smooth-cut and round ;
I wish it should please you
To buy of my broom,
Then would it well ease me
If market were done.

Have you any old boots,
Or any old shoon,
Pouch-rings, or buskins,
To cope for new broom ?
If so you have, maidens,
I pray you bring hither,
That you and I friendly
May bargain together.

New brooms, green brooms, will you buy any ?
Come, maidens, come quickly, let me take a penny.

Morning

The cock has crow'd an hour ago,
'Tis time we now dull sleep forgo ;
Tir'd Nature is by sleep redress'd,
And labour's overcome by rest.

We have outdone the work of night,
'Tis time we rise t'attend the light,
And e'er he shall his beams display,
To plot new business for the day.

None but the slothful or unsound,
Are by the sun in feathers found,
Nor, without rising with the sun,
Can the world's business e'er be done.

Hark ! Hark ! the watchful chanticleer,
Tells us the day's bright harbinger
Peeps o'er the eastern hills, to awe
And warn night's sov'reign to withdraw.

The morning curtains now are drawn,
And now appears the blushing dawn ;
Aurora has her roses shed,
To strew the way Sol's steeds must tread.

Xanthus and Æthon harness'd are,
To roll away the burning car,
And, snorting flame, impatient bear
The dressing of the charioteer.

The sable cheeks of sullen night
Are streak'd with rosy streams of light,

Whilst she retires away in fear,
To shade the other hemisphere.

The merry lark now takes her wings,
And long'd-for day's loud welcome sings,
Mounting her body out of sight,
As if she meant to meet the light.

Now doors and windows are unbar'd,
Each where are cheerful voices heard,
And round about good-morrows fly,
As if day taught humanity.

The chimneys now to smoke begin,
And the old wife sits down to spin,
Whilst Kate, taking her pail, does trip
Mull's swoln and strad'ling paps to strip.

Vulcan now makes his anvil ring,
Dick whistles loud, and Maud doth sing,
And Silvio with his bugle horn
Winds an imprime unto the morn.

Now through the morning doors behold
Phoebus array'd in burning gold,
Lashing his fiery steeds, displays
His warm and all enlight'ning rays.

Now each one to his work prepares,
All that have hands are labourers,
And manufacturers of each trade
By op'ning shops are open laid.

Hob yokes his oxen to the team,
The angler goes unto the stream,
The wood-man to the purlieus hies,
And lab'ring bees to load their thighs.

Fair Amarillis drives her flocks,
All night safe folded from the fox,
To flow'ry downs, where Colin stays,
To court her with his roundelays.

The traveller now leaves his inn,
A new day's journey to begin,
As he would post it with the day,
And early rising makes good way.

The slick-fac'd school-boy satchel takes,
And with slow pace small riddance makes ;
For why, the haste we make, you know,
To knowledge and to virtue's slow.

The fore-horse jingles on the road,
The waggoner lugs on his load,
The field with busy people snies,
The City rings with various cries.

The world is now a busy swarm,
All doing good, or doing harm ;
But let's take heed our acts be true,
For Heaven's eye sees all we do.

None can that piercing sight evade,
It penetrates the darkest shade,
And sin, though it could 'scape the eye,
Would be discover'd by the cry.

Evening

The day's grown old, the fainting sun
Has but a little way to run,
And yet his steeds, with all his skill,
Scarce lug the chariot down the hill.

With labour spent, and thirst opprest,
Whilst they strain hard to gain the west,
From fetlocks hot drops melted light,
Which turn to meteors in the night.

The shadows now so long do grow,
That brambles like tall cedars show,
Mole-hills seem mountains, and the ant
Appears a monstrous elephant.

A very little, little flock
Shades thrice the ground that it would stock ;
Whilst the small stripling following them,
Appears a mighty Polypheme.

These being brought into the fold,
And by the thrifty master told,
He thinks his wages are well paid,
Since none are either lost, or stray'd.

Now lowing herds are each-where heard,
Chains rattle in the villein's yard,
The cart's on tail set down to rest,
Bearing on high the cuckold's crest.

The hedge is stripped, the clothes brought in,
Nought's left without should be within,
The bees are hiv'd, and hum their charm,
Whilst every house does seem a swarm.

The cock now to the roost is pressed;
For he must call up all the rest;
The sow's fast pegg'd within the sty,
To still her squeaking progeny.

Each one has had his supping mess,
The cheese is put into the press,
The pans and bowls clean scalded all,
Rear'd up against the milk-house wall.

And now on benches all are sat
In the cool air to sit and chat,
Till Phoebus, dipping in the west,
Shall lead the world the way to rest.

Advice to a Shepherd

See that thy scrip hath store of healing tar,
And marking pitch and raddle ; nor forget
Thy sheers true-pointed, nor th' officious dog,
Faithful to teach thy stragglers to return :
So mayst thou aid who lag along, or steal
Aside into the furrows or the shades,
Silent to droop ; or who, at every gate
Or hillock, rub their sores and loosened wool.
But rather these, the feeble of thy flock,
Banish before th' autumnal months : ev'n age
Forbear too much to favour ; oft renew,
And through thy fold let joyous youth appear.
In teasing fly-time, dank, or frosty days,
With unctuous liquids, or the lees of oil,
Rub their soft skins, between the parted locks ;
Thus the Brigantes ; ' tis not idle pains :
Nor is that skill despised, which trims their tails,
Ere summer heats, of filth and tagged wool,
Coolness and cleanliness to health conduce.

The Employments of Life

THROUGH all the employments of life
Each neighbour abuses his brother ;
Trull and rogue they call husband and wife :
All professions berogue one another.

For the priest calls the lawyer a cheat,
The lawyer beknaves the divine ;
And the statesman, because he's so great,
Thinks his trade as honest as mine.

Reaping

Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky,
And, unperceived, unfolds the spreading day ;
Before the ripened field the reapers stand,
In fair array ; each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part, and mitigate
By nameless gentle offices her toil.
At once they stoop and swell the lusty sheaves ;
While thro' their cheerful band the rural talk,
The rural scandal and the rural jest
Fly harmless, to deceive the tedious time,
And steal unfelt the sultry hours away.
Behind the master walks, builds up the shocks ;
And, conscious, glancing oft on every side
His sated eye, feels his heart heave with joy.
The gleaners spread around, and here and there,
Spike after spike, their sparing harvest pick.
Be not too narrow, husbandmen ! but fling
From the full sheath, with charitable stealth,
The liberal handful. Think, O grateful think !
How good the God of Harvest is to you ;
Who pours abundance o'er your flowing fields ;
While these unhappy partners of your kind
Wide-hover round you, like the fowls of heaven,
And ask their humble dole. The various turns
Of fortune ponder ; that your sons may want
What now, with hard reluctance, faint, ye give.

Sheep-Washing

Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead :
The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
Healthful and strong ; full as the summer-rose
Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid,
Half-naked, swelling on the sight, and all
Her kindled graces burning o'er her cheek.
Even stooping age is here ; and infant-hands
Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load
O'ercharged, amid the kind oppression roll.
Wide flies the tedded grain ; all in a row
Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,
They spread the breathing harvest to the sun,
That throws refreshful round a rural smell :
Or, as they rake the green appearing ground,
And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
The russet hay-cock rises thick behind,
In order gay. While heard from dale to dale,
Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
Of happy labour, love, and social glee.

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,
They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
Compell'd, to where the mazy-running brook
Forms a deep pool : this bank abrupt and high,
And that fair-spreading in a pebbled shore.
Urg'd to the giddy brink, much is the toil,
The clamour much of men, and boys, and dogs,
Ere the soft fearful people to the flood
Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
On some impatient seizing, hurls them in :

Embolden'd then, nor hesitating more,
Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
And panting labour to the farther shore.
Repeated this, till deep the well-washed fleece
Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt
The trout is banished by the sordid stream ;
Heavy, and dripping, to the breezy brow
Slow-move the harmless race : where, as they spread
Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
Inly disturb'd, and wondering what this wild
Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints
The country fill ; and, toss'd from rock to rock,
Incessant bleatings run around the hills.
At last, of snowy white, the gathered flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerous pressed,
Head above head ; and, ranged in lusty rows
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.
The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,
With all her gay-drest maids attending round.
One, chief, in gracious dignity inthroned,
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and rays
Her smiles, sweet-beaming, on her shepherd king ;
While the glad circle round them yield their souls
To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.
Meantime, their joyous talk goes on apace :
Some mingling stir the melted tar, and some,
Deep on the new-shorn vagrant's heaving side,
To stamp his master's cypher ready stand ;
Others th' unwilling wether drag along,
And, glorying in his might, the sturdy boy
Holds by the twisted horns th' indignant ram.
Behold where bound, and of its robe bereft,
By needy Man, that all-depending lord,
How meek, how patient, the mild creature lies !
What softness in its melancholy face,
What dumb complaining innocence appears !

Fear not, ye gentle tribes, 'tis not the knife
Of horrid slaughter that is o'er you waved ;
No, 'tis the tender swain's well-guided shears,
Who having now, to pay his annual care,
Borrow'd your fleece, to you a cumbrous load,
Will send you bounding to your hills again.

Turmut Hoeing

'Twas on a jolly summer's morn, the twenty first of May,
Giles Scroggins took his turmut-hoe, with which he trudged away ;
For some delights in haymaking, and some they fancies mowin',
But of all the trades as I likes best, give I the turmut-hoein' ;
For the fly, the fly, the fly is on the turmut ;
And it's all my eye for we to try, to keep fly off the turmut.

Now the first place as I went to work, it were at Farmer Tower's,
He vowed and sweared and then declared, I were a first rate hoer.
Now the next place as I went to work, I took it by the job,
But if I'd ha' knowed it a little afore, I'd sooner been in quod.

When I was over at yonder farm, they sent for I a-mowin',
But I sent back word I'd sooner have the sack, than lose my turmut hoein'.
Now all you jolly farming lads as bides at home so warm,
I now concludes my ditty with wishing you no harm.
For the fly, the fly, the fly is on the turmut ;
And it's all my eye for we to try, to keep fly off the turmut.

The Image

A HUNDRED times when, roving high and low,
I have been harassed with the toil of verse,
Much pains and little progress, and at once
Some lovely Image in the song rose up
Full-formed, like Venus rising from the sea. . . .

The Boat on the Serchio

Day had awakened all things that be,
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
  And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
And the matin bell and the mountain bee :
Fire-flies were quenched on the dewy corn,
  Glow worms went out on the river's brim,
  Like lamps which a student forgets to trim :
The beetle forgot to wind his horn,
  The crickets were still in the meadow and hill :
Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
Fled from the brains which are their prey
From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each,
  Who shaped us to his ends and not our own ;
The million rose to learn, and one to teach
  What none yet ever knew or can be known.

Rural Morning

Soon as the twilight through the distant mist
In silver hemmings skirts the purple east,
Ere yet the sun unveils his smiles to view
And dries the morning's chilly robes of dew,
Young Hodge the horse-boy, with a soodly gait,
Slow climbs the stile, or opes the creaky gate,
With willow switch and halter by his side
Prepared for Dobbin, whom he means to ride ;
The only tune he knows still whistling o'er,
And humming scraps his father sung before,
As ' Wantley Dragon,' and the ' Magic Rose,'
The whole of music that his village knows,
Which wild remembrance, in each little town,
From mouth to mouth through ages handles down.
Onward he jolls, nor can the minstrel thongs
Entice him once to listen to their songs ;
Nor marks he once a blossom on his way ;
A senseless lump of animated clay—
With weather-beaten hat of rusty brown,
Stranger to brinks, and often to a crown ;
With slop-frock suiting to the ploughman's taste,
Its greasy skirtings twisted round his waist ;
And hardened high-lows clenched with nails around,
Clamping defiance o'er the stoney ground,
The deadly foes to many a blossomed sprout
That luckless meets him in his morning's rout.
In hobbling speed he roams the pasture round,
Till hunted Dobbin and the rest are found ;
Where some, from frequent meddlings of his whip,
Well know their foe, and often try to slip ;

While Dobbin, tamed by age and labour, stands
To meet all trouble from his brutish hands,
And patient goes to gate or knowly brake,
The teasing burden of his foe to take ;
Who, soon as mounted, with his switching weals,
Puts Dob's best swiftness in his heavy heels,
The toltering bustle of a blundering trot
Which whips and cudgels ne'er increased a jot,
Though better speed was urged by the clown—
And thus he snorts and jostles to the town.
And now, when toil and summer's in its prime,
In every vill, at morning's earliest time,
To early-risers many a Hodge is seen,
And many a Dob's heard clattering o'er the green.
Now straying beams from day's unclosing eye
In copper-coloured patches flush the sky,
And from night's prison strugglingly encroach,
To bring the summons of warm day's approach,
Till, slowly mounting o'er the ridge of clouds
That yet shows half his face, and half enshrouds,
The unfettered sun takes his unbounded reign
And wakes all life to noise and toil again :
And while his opening mellows o'er the scenes
Of wood and field their many mingling greens,
Industry's bustling din once more devours
The soothing peace of morning's early hours :
The grunt of hogs freed from their nightly dens
And constant cacklings of new-laying hens,
And ducks and geese that clamorous joys repeat
The splashing comforts of the pond to meet,
And chirping sparrows dropping from the eaves
For offal kernels that the poultry leaves,
Oft signal-calls of danger chittering high
At skulking cats and dogs approaching nigh.
And lowing steers that hollow echoes wake
Around the yard, their nightly fast to break,

As from each barn the lumping flail rebounds
In mingling concert with the rural sounds ;
While o'er the distant fields more faintly creep
The murmuring bleatings of unfolded sheep,
And ploughman's callings that more hoarse proceed
Where industry still urges labour's speed,
The bellowing of cows with udders full
That wait the welcome halloo of ' come mull,'
And rumbling waggons deafening again,
Rousing the dust along the narrow lane,
And crackling whips, and shepherd's hooting cries,
From woodland echoes urging sharp replies.
Hodge, in his waggon, marks the wondrous tongue,
And talks with echo as he drives along ;
Still cracks his whip, bawls every horse's name,
And echo still as ready bawls the same :
The puzzling mystery he would gladly cheat,
And fain would utter what it can't repeat,
Till speedless trials prove the doubted elf
As skilled in noise and sounds as Hodge himself ;
And, quite convinced with the proofs it gives,
The boy drives on and fancies echo lives,
Like some wood-fiend that frights benighted men,
The troubling spirit of a robber's den.

And now the blossom of the village view,
With airy hat of straw and apron blue,
And short-sleeved gown, that half to guess reveals
By fine-turned arms what beauty it conceals ;
Whose cheeks health flushes with as sweet a red
As that which stripes the woodbine o'er her head ;
Deeply she blushes on her morn's employ,
To prove the fondness of some passing boy,
Who, with a smile that thrills her soul to view,
Holds the gate open till she passes through,
While turning nods back thanks for kindness done,
And looks—if looks could speak—proclaim her won.

With well-scoured buckets on proceeds the maid,
And drives her cows to milk beneath the shade,
Where scarce a sunbeam to molest her steals—
Sweet as the thyme that blossoms where she kneels ;
And there oft scares the cooing amorous dove
With her own favoured melodies of love.
Snugly retired in yet dew-laden bowers,
This sweetest specimen of rural flowers
Displays, red glowing in the morning wind,
The powers of health and nature when combined.

Last on the road the cowboy careless swings,
Leading tamed cattle in their tending strings,
With shining tin to keep his dinner warm
Swung at his back, or tucked beneath his arm ;
Whose sun-burnt skin, and cheeks chuffed out with fat,
Are dyed as rusty as his napless hat.
And others, driving loose their herds at will,
Are now heard whooping up the pasture-hill ;
Peeled sticks they bear of hazel or of ash,
The rib-marked hides of careless cows to thrash.
In sloven garb appears each bawling boy,
As fit and suiting to his rude employ ;
His shoes, worn down by many blundering treads,
Oft show the tenants needing safer sheds :
The pithy bunch of unripe nuts to seek,
And crabs sun-reddened with a tempting cheek,
From pasture hedges, daily puts to rack
His tattered clothes, that scarcely screen the back,—
Daubed all about as if besmeared with blood,
Stained with the berries of the brambly wood
That stud the straggling briars as black as jet,
Which, when his cattle lair, he runs to get ;
Or smaller kinds, as if beglossed with dew
Shining dim-powdered with a downy blue,
That on weak tendrils lowly creeping grow
Where, choked in flags and sedges, wandering slow,

The brook purls simmering its declining tide
Down the crooked boundings of the pasture side.
There they to hunt the luscious fruit delight,
Oft catching prickly struttles on their rout,
And dabbling keep within their charges' sight;
And miller-thumbs and gudgeons driving out,
Hid near the arched brig under many a stone
That from its wall rude passing clowns have thrown.
And while in peace cows eat and chew their cuds,
Moozing cool sheltered 'neath the skirting woods,
To double uses they the hours convert,
Turning the toils of labour into sport;
Till morning's long streaking shadows lose their tails,
And cooling winds swoon into faltering gales;
And searching sunbeams warm and sultry creep,
Waking the teazing insects from their sleep;
And dreaded gadflies with their drowsy hum
On the burnt wings of mid-day zephyrs come,—
Urging each lown to leave his sports in fear,
To stop his starting cows that dread the fly;
Droning unwelcome tidings on his ear,
That the sweet peace of rural morn's gone by.

Sparkles from the Wheel

WHERE the city's ceaseless crowd moves on the livelong day,
Withdrawn I join a group of children watching, I pause aside with them.

By the curb toward the edge of the flagging,
A knife-grinder works at his wheel sharpening a great knife,
Bending over he carefully holds it to the stone, by foot and knee,
With measured tread he turns rapidly, as he presses with light but firm hand,
Forth issue then in copious golden jets,
Sparkles from the wheel.

Song

So here hath been dawning
  Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
  Slip useless away ?
Out of eternity
  This new day is born ;
Into eternity
  At night will return.

So here hath been dawning
  Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
  Slip useless away ?
Behold it aforetime,
  No eye ever did ;
So soon it for ever
  From all eyes is hid.

Tapestry Trees

Oak

I am the Roof-tree and the Keel ;
I bridge the seas for woe and weal.

Fir

High o'er the lordly oak I stand,
And drive him on from land to land.

Ash

I heft my brother's iron bane ;
I shaft the spear and build the wain.

Yew

Dark down the windy dale I grow,
The father of the fateful Bow.

Poplar

The war-shaft and the milking-bowl
I make, and keep the hay-wain whole.

Olive

The King I bless, the lamps I trim ;
In my warm wave do fishes swim.

Apple-tree

I bowed my head to Adam's will ;
The cups of toiling men I fill.

VINE

I draw the blood from out the earth ;
I store the sun for winter mirth.

ORANGE-TREE

Amidst the greenness of my night,
My odorous lamps hang round and bright.

FIG-TREE

I who am little among trees
In honey-making mate the bees.

MULBERRY-TREE

Love's lack hath dyed my berries red :
For Love's attire my leaves are shed.

PEAR-TREE

High o'er the mead-flowers' hidden feet
I bear aloft my burden sweet.

BAY

Look on my leafy boughs, the Crown
Of living song and dead renown !

The Flowering Orchard

Lo, silken my garden,
and silken my sky,
And silken my apple boughs
hanging on high ;
All wrought by the Worm
in the peasant carle's cot
On the Mulberry leafage
when summer was hot !

The Harvest

. . . . . .

THERE is work in the mead as of old ;
they are eager at winning the hay,
While every sun sets bright
and begets a fairer day ;
The forks shine white in the sun
round the yellow red-wheeled wain,
Where the mountain of hay grows fast ;
and now from out of the lane
Comes the ox-team drawing another,
comes the bailiff and the beer,
And thump, thump, goes the farmer's nag
o'er the narrow bridge of the weir.

. . . . . .

L'Allegro

. . . . . .

Or to the Farm, where, high on trampled stacks,
The labourers stir themselves amain
To feed with hasty sheaves of grain
The deaf'ning engine's boisterous maw,
And snatch again,
From to-and-fro tormenting racks,
The toss'd and hustled straw ;
Whilst others tend the shedded wheat
That fills yon row of shuddering sacks,
Or shift them quick, or bind them neat,
And dogs and boys with sticks
Wait, murderous, for the rats that leave the ruined ricks ;
And, all the bags being fill'd and rank'd fivefold, they pour
The treasure on the barn's clean floor,
And take them back for more,
Until the whole bared harvest beauteous lies
Under our pleased and prosperous eyes.

. . . . . .

The Plough

. . . . . .

The past was faded like a dream ;
There come the jingling of a team,
A ploughman's voice, a clink of chain,
Slow hoofs and harness under strain.
Up the slow slope a team came bowing,
Old Callow at his autumn ploughing,
Old Callow stooped above the hales,
Ploughing the stubble into wales.
His grave eyes looking straight ahead,
Shearing a long straight furrow red ;
His plough foot high to give it earth
To bring new food for men to birth.

O wet red swathe of earth laid bare,
O truth, O strength, O gleaming share,
O patient eyes that watch the goal,
O ploughman of the sinner's soul,
O Jesus drive the coulter deep
To plough my living man from sleep.

Slow up the hill the plough team plod,
Old Callow at the task of God,
Helped by man's wit, helped by the brute,
Turning a stubborn clay to fruit,
His eyes for ever on some sign
To help him plough a perfect line.
At top of rise the plough team stopped,
The fore-horse bent his head and cropped ;

Then the chains chack, the brasses jingle,
The lean reins gather through the cringle,
The figures move against the sky,
The clay wave breaks as they go by . . .

Down the long slope the plough team drove.
The tossing rooks arose and hove.
A stone struck on the share. A word
Came to the team. The red earth stirred.
. . . . . .

The Sacrifice

He slipped aside
The white-hot slide
And gazed upon the bubbling steel ;
And stood astare
Until the glare
Had blinded him, and like a wheel
With white-hot felloe sparking red
His brain was turning in his head.

Night after night
He'd watched that white
And bubbling hell-broth seethe and boil :
His wits had fed
The furnace red
Till now, released from toil,
He shrivelled up without a whine
Before the fire-god's glowing shrine.

The Plough

He sniffed the clean and eager smell
Of crushed wild garlic, as he thrust
Beneath the sallows ; and a spell
He stood there munching a thick crust—
The fresh tang giving keener zest
To bread and cheese—and watched a pair
Of wagtails preening wing and breast,
Then running—flirting tails in air,
And pied plumes sleeked to silky sheen—
Chasing each other in and out
The wet wild garlic's white and green.

And then remembering, with a shout,
And rattle whirring, he ran back
Again into the Fair Maid's Mead,
To scare the rascal thieves and black
That flocked from far and near to feed
Upon the sprouting grain. As one
They rose with clapping, rustling wings—
Rooks, starlings, pigeons, in the sun
Circling about him in wide rings,
And plovers hovering over him
In mazy, interweaving flight—
Until it made his young wits swim
To see them up against the light,
A dazzling dance of black and white
Against the clear blue April sky—
Wings on wings in flashing flight
Swooping low and soaring high—
Swooping, soaring, fluttering, flapping,
Tossing, tumbling, swerving, dipping,

Chattering, cawing, creaking, clapping,
Till he felt his senses slipping,
And gripped his corncrake rattle tight,
And flourished it above his head
Till every bird was out of sight ;
And laughed, when all had flown and fled,
To think that he, and all alone,
Could put so many thieves to rout.

Then sitting down upon a stone
He wondered if the school were out—
The school where, only yesterday,
He'd sat at work among his mates—
At work that now seemed children's play,
With pens and pencils, books and slates—
Although he'd liked it well enough,
The hum and scuffling of the school,
And hadn't cared when Grim-and-Gruff
Would call him dunderhead and fool.

And he could see them sitting there—
His class-mates, in the lime-washed room,
With fingers inked and towzled hair—
Bill Baxter with red cheeks a-bloom,
And bright black eyes ; and Ginger Jim
With freckled face and solemn look,
Who'd wink a pale blue eye at him,
Then sit intent upon his book,
While, caught a-giggle, he was caned.

He'd liked that room, he'd liked it all—
The window steaming when it rained ;
The sunlight dancing on the wall
Among the glossy charts and maps ;
The blotchy stain beside the clock
That only he of all the chaps

Knew for a chart of Dead Man's Rock
That lies in Tiger Island Bay—
The reef on which the schooners split
And founder, that would bear away
The treasure chest of Cut-throat-Kit,
That's buried under Black Bill's bones
Beneath the purple pepper tree . . .
A trail of clean suck'd cherry stones,
Which you must follow carefully,
Across the dunes of yellow sand
Leads winding upward from the beach
Till, with a pistol in each hand,
And cutlass 'twixt your teeth, you reach . . .

Plumping their fat crops peacefully
Were plovers, pigeons, starlings, rooks,
Feeding on every side while he
Was in the land of story books.
He raised his rattle with a shout
And scattered them with yell and crake . . .
A man must mind what he's about
And keep his silly wits awake,
Not go wool-gathering, if he'd earn
His wage. And soon, no schoolboy now,
He'd take on a man's job, and learn
To build a rick, and drive the plough,
Like father. . . .

Up against the sky,
Beyond the spinney and the stream,
With easy stride and steady eye
He saw his father drive his team,
Turning the red marl gleaming wet
Into long furrows clean and true.
And dreaming there, he longed to set
His young hand to the ploughshare too.

The Line-Gang

HERE come the line-gang pioneering by.
They throw a forest down less cut than broken.
They plant dead trees for living, and the dead
They string together with a living thread.
They string an instrument against the sky
Wherein words whether beaten out or spoken
Will run as hushed as when they were a thought.
But in no hush they string it : they go past
With shouts afar to pull the cable taut,
To hold it hard until they make it fast,
To ease away—they have it. With a laugh,
And oath of towns that set the wild at naught,
They bring the telephone and telegraph.

After Apple-Picking

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples : I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in ;
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking : I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,

Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

Making Cider

I saw within the wheelwright's shed
The big round cartwheels, blue and red ;
A plough with blunted share ;
A blue tin jug ; a broken chair ;
And paint in trial patchwork square
Slapped up against the wall ;
The lumber of the wheelwright's trade,
And tools on benches neatly laid,
The brace, the adze, the awl ;

And, framed within the latticed panes,
Above the cluttered sill,
Saw rooks upon the stubble hill
Seeking forgotten grains ;

And all the air was sweet and shrill
With juice of apples heaped in skips,
Fermenting, rotten, soft with bruise,
And all the yard was strewn with pips,
Discarded pulp, and wrung-out ooze,
That ducks with rummaging flat bill
Searched through beside the cider press
To gobble in their greediness.

The young men strained upon the crank
To wring the last reluctant inch.
They laughed together, fair and frank,
And threw their loins across the winch.
A holiday from field and dung,

From plough and harrow, scythe and spade,
To dabble in another trade,
To crush the pippins in the slats,
And see that in the little vats
An extra pint was wrung ;

While round about the worthies stood,
Profuse in comment, praise or blame,
Content the press should be of wood,
Advising rum, decrying wheat,
And black strong sugar makes it sweet,
But still resolved, with maundering tongue,
That cider could not be the same
As once when they were young ;
But still the young contemptuous men
Laughed kindly at their old conceit,
And strained upon the crank again.

Now barrels ranged in portly line
Mature through winter's sleep,
Aping the leisured sloth of wine
That dreams by Tiber or by Rhine,
Mellowing slow and deep ;
But keen and cold the northern nights
Sharpen the quiet yard,
And sharp like no rich southern wine
The tang of cider bites ;
For here the splintered stars and hard
Hold England in a frosty guard,
Orion and the Pleiades,
Above the wheelwright's shed,
And Sirius resting on the trees
While all the village snores abed.

Harvest-End

At Dagenhams, long after sun was set,
While light still tarried, waggons rumbled back
Their swaying loads toward the half built stack

Where, from afar, the labourers stood clear,
Dark figures twirling heavy sheaves to feed
The man who shook and settled them to his need.

Like mummers in an old morality
They moved across the sky's deep summer dusk,
Miming their simple parts with heave and thrust

In a play that is the oldest of them all,
The strife where might of man and earth are matched
Till the house of corn be built four-square and thatched.

Stallion

ROUND by the black barn and the shrunken pond
Now treading slow, now sideling proudly on,
Through warm air startled by his eager neigh
The Suffolk stallion cleaves his stately way.

His body gleaming firm as moulded bronze,
His feathered fetlocks plumed with silken gold,
His belted tail, thick mane, with ribands blent,
He strides to mate his mares, magnificent.

The deep expectant eyes shine mildly bright,
The rich flanks quiver, stiff the great neck curves.
Faster the mighty head throws toss and fling
When stabled mares whinny their welcoming.

With dull and sullen face, thin buskined legs,
Leading his charge in apathy and ease,
A dusty groom plods wearily beside
This majesty of limb, this fruitful pride.

IDLENESS

Stool Ball

. . . . . .

Now milkmaids' pails are deckt with flowers,
And men begin to drink in bowers,
The mackerels come up in shoals,
To fill the mouths of hungry souls ;
Sweet sillabubs, and lip-loved tansey,
For William is prepared by Nancy.
Much time is wasted now away,
At pigeon-holes, and nine-pin play,
Whilst hob-nail Dick, and simp'ring Frances,
Trip it away in country dances ;
At stool-ball and at barley-break,
Wherewith they harmless pastime make.

. . . . . .

The Village Festival

Let the bells ring, and let the boys sing,
The young lasses skip and play ;
Let the cups go round, till round goes the ground ;
Our learned old vicar will stay.

Let the pig turn merrily, merrily, ah !
And let the fat goose swim ;
For verily, verily, verily, ah !
Our vicar this day shall be trim.

The stewed cock shall crow, cock-a-loddle-loo,
A loud cock-a-loodle shall he crow ;
The duck and the drake shall swim in a lake
Of onions and claret below.

Our wives shall be neat, to bring in our meat
To thee our most noble adviser ;
Our pains shall be great, and the bottles shall sweat,
And we ourselves will be wiser.

We'll labour and swink, we'll kiss and we'll drink,
And tithes shall come thicker and thicker ;
We'll fall to our plough, and get children enow,
And thou shalt be learned old vicar.

The Garden

How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the palm, the oak, or bays ;
And their incessant labours see
Crowned from some single herb or tree
Whose short and narrow verged shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid ;
While all the flowers and trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose.

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear ?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow ;
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So amorous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name :
Little, alas ! they know or heed
How far these beauties hers exceed !
Fair trees ! wheres'e'er your barks I wound
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race ;

Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow ;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead !
Ripe apples drop about my head ;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine ;
The nectarine and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach ;
Stumbling on melons as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile, the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness :
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find ;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas ;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide :
There like a bird it sits, and sings,
Then whets and combs its silver wings ;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate :
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet !

But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there :
Two paradises 'twere in one,
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skilful gardener drew
Of flowers, and herbs, this dial new ;
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run ;
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd but with herbs and flowers !

Idleness, an Ode

Goddess of Ease, leave Lethe's brink,
  Obsequious to the Muse and me ;
For once endure the pain to think,
  Oh ! sweet insensibility !

Sister of peace and indolence,
  Bring, Muse, bring numbers soft and slow,
Elaborately void of sense,
  And sweetly thoughtless let them flow.

Near some cowslip-painted mead,
  There let me doze out the dull hours,
And under me let Flora spread
  A sofa of her softest flowers.

Where, Philomel, your notes you breathe
  Forth from behind the neighbouring pine,
And murmurs of the stream beneath
  Still flow in unison with thine.

For thee, O Idleness, the woes
  Of life we patiently endure,
Thou art the source whence labour flows,
  We shun thee but to make thee sure.

For who'd sustain war's toil and waste,
  Or who the hoarse thundering of the sea,
But to be idle at the last
  And find a pleasing end in thee.

Written in the Fields

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment ?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by :
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

Song After Labour

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years,
Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,
Or hope again for aught that I can say,
The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather, when aweary of your mirth,
From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
And, feeling kindly unto all the earth,
Grudge every minute as it passes by,
Made the more mindful that the sweet days die—
—Remember me a little then I pray,
The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care
That weighs us down who live and earn our bread,
These idle verses have no power to bear ;
So let me sing of names remembered,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite away
From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked straight ?
Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,
Telling a tale not too importunate
To those who in the sleepy regions stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Idleness

I saw old Idleness, fat, with great cheeks
Puffed to the huge circumference of a sigh,
But past all tinge of apples long ago.
His boyish fingers twiddled up and down
The filthy remnant of a cup of physic
That thicked in odour all the while he stayed.
His eyes were sad as fishes that swim up
And stare upon an element not theirs
Through a thin skin of shrewish water, then
Turn on a languid fin, and dip down, down,
Into unplumbed, vast, oozy deeps of dream.
His stomach was his master and proclaimed it :
And never were such meagre puppets made
The slaves of such a tyrant, as his thoughts
Of that obese epitome of ills.
Trussed up he sat, the mockery of himself ;
And when upon the wan green of his eye
I marked the gathering lustre of a tear,
Thought I myself must weep, until I caught
A grey, smug smile of satisfaction smirch
His pallid features at his misery.
And laugh did I, to see the little snares
He had set for pests to vex him : his great feet
Prisoned in greater boots ; so narrow a stool
To seat such elephantine parts as his ;
Ay, and the book he read, a Hebrew Bible ;
And, to incite a gross and backward wit,
An old, crabbed, wormed, Greek dictionary ; and
A foxy Ovid bound in dappled calf.

Leisure

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare ?

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows :

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass :

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night :

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance :

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began ?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

A Great Time

SWEET Chance that led my steps abroad,
Beyond the town, where wild flowers grow—
A rainbow and a cuckoo, Lord,
  How rich and great the times are now !
    Know, all ye sheep
    And cows, that keep
On staring that I stand so long
  In grass that's wet from heavy rain—
A rainbow and a cuckoo's song
  May never come together again ;
    May never come
    This side the tomb.

Everyone Sang

EVERYONE suddenly burst out singing ;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields ; on ; on ; and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears, and horror
Drifted away . . . O but every one
Was a bird ; and the song was wordless ; the singing will never be done.

CONTENT

Ut Hoy !

Can I not sing but ' Hoy,'
Whan the joly shepard made so much joy?

The shepard upon a hill he satt ;
He had on him his tabard and his hat,
His tarbox, his pipe, and his flagat ;
His name was called Joly Joly Wat,
For he was a gud herdes boy.
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

The shepard upon a hill was laid ;
His dog to his girdell was taid ;
He had not slept but a litill braid,
But ' Gloria in excelsis ' was to him said.
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

The shepard on a hill he stode ;
Round about him his shepe they yode ;
He put his hand under his hode,
He saw a star as rede as blode.
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

The shepard said anon right,
' I will go see yon farly sight,
Where as the angel singeth on hight,
And the star that shineth so bright.'
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

' Now farewell Mall, and also Will !
For my love go ye all still
Unto I com again you till,
Ane evermore, Will, ring well thy bell.'
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

' Now must I go where Christ was born ;
Farewell ! I com again to morn.
Dog, kepe well my shepe fro ye corn,
And warn well ' Warroke ' when I blow my horn ! '
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

Whan Wat to Bedlam com was,
He swet, he had gone faster than a pace ;
He found Jesu in a simpell place,
Betwene an ox and an asse.
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

' Jesu I offer to thee here my pipe,
My skirt, my tar-box, and my scripe ;
Home to my fellowes now will I skipe,
And also looke unto my shepe.'
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

' Now farewell, mine own herdesman Wat ! '
' Yea, for God, Lady, even so I hat ;
Lull well Jesu in thy lape,
And farwell, Joseph, with thy round cape ! '
Ut hoy !
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

'Now may I well both hope and sing,
For I have ben at Christes bering;
Home to my fellowes now will I fling,
Christ of heven to his bliss us bring!'
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

The Fisher's Life

WHAT joy attends the fisher's life !
Blow, winds, blow !
The fisher and his faithful wife !
Row, boys, row !
He drives no plough on stubborn land,
His fields are ready to his hand ;
No nipping frosts his orchards fear,
He has his autumn all the year !

The husbandman has rent to pay,
Blow, winds, blow !
And seed to purchase every day,
Row, boys, row !
But he who farms the rolling deeps
Though never sowing, always reaps ;
The ocean's fields are fair and free,
There are no rent days on the sea !

The Jolly Ploughboy

COME, all you jolly ploughboys, and help me to sing,
I will sing in the praise of you all,
For if we don't labour, how shall there be bread ?
I will sing and be merry withal.

There were two loving brothers, two brothers of old,
And of old these two brothers were born,
The one was a shepherd and tender of sheep,
And the other a planter of corn.

We've moiled, we've toiled, through mire and through clay,
No comfort at all can we find ;
We'll sit down and sing, and drive dull care away,
We'll not live in this world to repine.

Here's April, here is May, here is June and July ;
What a pleasure to see the corn grow !
In August it rip'neth ; we reap and sheaves tie,
And go down with our scythes for to mow.

Now when we have a-pitched up every sheaf,
And a-gleaned up every ear,
Without more ado we'll to plough and to sow
To provide for the harvest next year.

'Twas on a Monday Morning

'Twas on a Monday morning
When I beheld my darling,
She looked so neat and charming
  In every high degree ;
She looked so neat and charming O,
A-washing of her linen, O ;
  Dashing away with the smoothing iron,
  She stole my heart away.

'Twas on a Tuesday morning
When I beheld my darling
A-starching of her linen, O.

'Twas on a Wednesday morning
When I beheld my darling
A-hanging out her linen, O.

'Twas on a Thursday morning
When I beheld my darling
A-ironing of her linen, O.

'Twas on a Friday morning
When I beheld my darling
A-folding of her linen, O.

'Twas on a Saturday morning
When I beheld my darling
A-airing of her linen, O.

'Twas on a Sunday morning
When I beheld my darling,

She looked so neat and charming
In every high degree ;
She looked so neat and charming O,
A-wearing of her linen, O ;
Dashing away with the smoothing iron,
She stole my heart away.

The Sheep Shearing

How delightful to see,
In those evenings of Spring,
The sheep going home to the fold.
The master doth sing,
As he views everything,
And his dog goes before him where told.

The sixth month of the year,
In the month called June,
When the weather's too hot to be borne,
The Master doth say
As he goes on his way :
' To-morrow my sheep shall be shorn.'

Now as for those sheep
They're delightful to see,
They're a blessing to a man on his farm.
For their flesh it is good,
It's the best of all food,
And the wool it will clothe us up warm.

Now the sheep they're all shorn,
And the wool carried home,
Here's a health to our Master and Flock ;
And, if we should stay,
Till the last goes away,
I'm afraid 'twill be past ten o'clock.

Hop Picking

At the early break of dawn,
As in slumbers light we lie,
Cheerly sounds the bugle horn
To the hop-grounds, Pickers, hie.

Now they raise the wreathèd poles,
And they lay them 'cross the bin,
Men and women, honest souls,
Now the gathering task begin.

Now the hops they bear to th' oast,
There they dry them o'er the fire,
Then they are the planter's boast,
And the object of the buyer.

These preserve our finest ale,
Give the flavour to the beer—
Never may our hop grounds fail,
Never fail old English cheer.

Jolly Fellows that Follow the Plough

'Twas early one morning at breaking of day,
The cocks were a-crowing, the farmer did say,
' Come arise, my good fellows, arise with good will,
For your horses want something their bellies to fill.'

We jumped out of bed and slipped into our clothes,
Away to the stable each merrily goes.
When six o'clock cometh to breakfast we go,
To good bread and cheese and the best of all stingo.

When seven o'clock soundeth to work do we go,
We hitch up our horses and halloo Wee Whoa !
At eight o'clock, lads, we are merry and bold,
To see of us which the best furrow can hold.

The farmer came to us and thus did he say,
' What have you been doing, lads, all the long day ?
You've not ploughed your acre, I swear and I vow,
You are all lazy fellows that follow the plough.'

The carter turns round with a twinkling eye,
' We have all ploughed our acre, I tell you no lie,
We have all ploughed our acre, I swear and I vow,
So we're the right fellows that follow the plough.

The farmer he laughed, for he lovèd a joke,
' 'Tis past two o'clock, boys, 'tis time to unyoke.
Unharness your horses and rub them down well,
And so I will give you a jug of brown ale.'

So, all my fine fellows, wherever you be,
Come take my advice and be ruled by me.
Draw your furrows aright, plough your acre and know
That such are the fellows to follow the plough.

Sweet Content

ART thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers ?
O sweet content !
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplex'd ?
O punishment !
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vex'd
To add to golden numbers golden numbers ?
O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !
Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;
Honest labour bears a lovely face ;
Then hey nonny nonny—hey nonny nonny !

Can'st drink the waters of the crisped spring ?
O sweet content !
Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears ?
O punishment !
Then he that patiently want's burden bears,
No burden bears, but is a king, a king !
O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !
Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;
Honest labour bears a lovely face ;
Then hey nonny nonny—hey nonny nonny !

The Song of the Cyclops

Brave iron, brave hammer, from your sound
The art of music has her ground ;
On the anvil thou keep'st time,
Thy knick-a-knock is a smith's best chime.
Yet thwick-a-thwack, thwick, thwack-a-thwack,
thwack,
Make our brawny sinews crack :
Then pit-a-pat, pat, pit-a-pat, pat,
Till thickest bars be beaten flat.

We shoe the horses of the sun,
Harness the dragons of the moon ;
Forge Cupid's quiver, bow, and arrows,
And our Dame's coach that's drawn with sparrows.
Till thwick-a-thwack, etc.

Jove's roaring cannons and his rammers
We beat out with our Lemnian hammers ;
Mars his gauntlet, helm and spear,
And Gorgon shield are all made here.
Till thwick-a-thwack, etc.

The grate which, shut, the day outbars,
Those golden studs which nail the stars,
The globe's case and the axle-tree,
Who can hammer these but we ?
Till thwick-a-thwack, etc.

A warming-pan to heat earth's bed,
Lying i' th' frozen zone half-dead ;

Hob-nails to serve the man i' th' moon,
And sparrowbills to clout Pan's shoon,
Whose work but ours ?
Till thwick-a-thwack, etc.

Venus' kettles, pots and pans
We make, or else she brawls and bans ;
Tongs, shovels, andirons have their places,
Else she scratches all our faces.
Till thwick-a-thwack, thwick, thwack-a-thwack thwack,
Make our brawny sinews crack :
Then pit-a-pat, pat, pit-a-pat, pat,
Till thickest bars be beaten flat.

Coridon's Song

Oh, the sweet contentment
The countryman doth find.
High trololie lollie loe,
High trololie lee,
That quiet contemplation
Possesseth all my mind :
Then care away,
And wend along with me.

For courts are full of flattery,
As hath too oft been tried ;
High trololie lollie loe,
High trololie lee,
The city full of wantonness,
And both are full of pride.
Then care away,
And wend along with me.

But oh, the honest countryman
Speaks truly from his heart,
High trololie lollie loe,
High trololie lee,
His pride is in his tillage,
His horses and his cart :
Then care away,
And wend along with me.

Our clothing is good sheepskins,
Grey russet for our wives,
High trololie lollie loe,
High trololie lee,

'Tis warmth and not gay clothing
That doth prolong our lives ;
Then care away,
And wend along with me.

The ploughman though he labour hard,
Yet on the holy day,
High trololliе lollie loe,
High trololliе lee,
No emperor so merrily
Does pass his time away ;
Then care away,
And wend along with me.

To recompense our tillage
The heavens afford us show'rs ;
High trololliе lollie loe,
High trololliе lee.
And for our sweet refreshments
The earth affords us bowers :
Then care away,
And wend along with me.

The cuckoo and the nightingale
Full merrily do sing
High trololliе lollie loe,
High trololliе lee,
And with their pleasant roundelays,
Bid welcome to the spring :
Then care away,
And wend along with me.

This is not half the happiness
The countryman enjoys ;
High trololliе lollie loe,
High trololliе lee,

Though others think they have as much,
Yet he that says so lies :
Then come away, turn
Countryman, with me.

Oh, the Brave Fisher's Life

Oh, the brave fisher's life,
It is the best of any,
'Tis full of pleasure, void of strife,
And 'tis beloved of many :
Other joys
Are but toys,
Only this
Lawful is,
For our skill
Breeds no ill,
But content and pleasure.

In a morning up we rise
Ere Aurora's peeping,
Drink a cup to wash our eyes,
Leave the sluggard sleeping ;
Then we go
To and fro,
With our knacks
At our backs,
To such streams
As the Thames,
If we have the leisure.

When we please to walk abroad
For our recreation,
In the fields is our abode
Full of delectation :
Where in a brook
With a hook,

Or a lake
Fish we take,
There we sit
For a bit,
Till we fish entangle.

We have gentles in a horn,
We have paste and worms too,
We can watch both night and morn,
Suffer rain and storms too :
None do here
Use to swear,
Oaths do fray
Fish away,
We sit still,
Watch our quill,
Fishers must not wrangle.

If the sun's excessive heat
Makes our bodies swelter,
To an osier hedge we get
For a friendly shelter,
Where in a dike
Perch or Pike,
Roach or Dace
We do chase,
Bleak or Gudgeon,
Without grudging,
We are still contented.

Or we sometimes pass an hour
Under a green willow,
That defends us from a show'r,
Making earth our pillow ;
There we may
Think and pray

Before death
Stops our breath :
Other joys
Are but toys
And to be lamented.

The Boatie Rows

O WEEL may the boatie row,
And better may it speed ;
And liesome may the boatie row
That wins the bairnies' bread !
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel ;
And meikle luck attend the boat,
The murlain and the creel !

I cuist my line in Largo Bay,
And fishes I caught nine ;
There's three to boil, and three to fry,
And three to bait the line.
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows indeed ;
And weel may the boatie row
That wins my bairnies' bread.

O weel may the boatie row
That fills a heavy creel,
And cleeds us a' frae tap to tae,
And buys our parritch meal !
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows indeed,
And happy be the lot of a'
That wish the boatie speed !

When Jamie vowed he wad be mine,
And won frae me my heart,
O meikle lighter grew my creel ;
He swore we'd never part.

The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel ;
And meikle lighter is the load
When love bears up the creel.

My kertch I put upon my head,
And dressed mysel' fu' braw ;
But dowie, dowie was my heart
When Jamie gaed awa'.
But weel may the boatie row,
And lucky be her part ;
And lightsome be the lassie's care,
That yields an honest heart !

When Sandy, Jock and Janetie,
Are up, and gotten lear,
They'll help to gar the boatie row,
And lighten a' our care.
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel ;
And lightsome be her heart that bears
The murlain and the creel !

When we are auld, and sair bowed down,
And hirplin at the door,
They'll row to keep us dry and warm,
As we did them before.
Then weel may the boatie row,
And better may it speed,
And happy be the lot of a'
That wish the boatie speed !

The Shepherd

How sweet is the shepherd's sweet lot !
From the morn to the evening he strays ;
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lamb's innocent call,
And he hears the ewe's tender reply ;
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their Shepherd is nigh.

The Chimney Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry ' 'weep ! 'weep ! 'weep ! 'weep ! '
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd : so I said
' Hush, Tom ! never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.'

And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight !—
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned and Jack
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an angel, who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins, and set them all free ;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind ;
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke ; and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm :
So, if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

Bessie and Her Spinning Wheel

O LEEZE me on my spinnin'-wheel,
And leeze me on my rock and reel ;
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,
And haps me fiel and warms at e'en !
I'll set me down and sing and spin,
While laigh descends the simmer sun,
Blest wi' content, and milk and meal—
O leeze me on my spinnin'-wheel.

On ilka hand the burnies trot,
And meet below my theekit cot ;
The scented birk and hawthorn white,
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdies' nest,
And little fishes caller rest :
The sun blinks kindly in the biel',
Where blithe I turn my spinnin'-wheel.

On lofty aiks the cushats wail,
And echo cons the doolfu' tale ;
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
Delighted, rival ither's lays :
The craik amang the clover hay,
The paitrick whirring o'er the ley,
The swallow jinkin' round my shiel,
Amuse me at my spinning wheel.

Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,
Aboon distress, below envy,
O wha would leave this humble state,
For a' the pride of a' the great ?
Amid their flaring, idle toys,
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Bessie at her spinning wheel ?

The Sower's Song

Now hands to seedsheet, boys !
We step and we cast ; Old Time's on wing
And would ye partake of Harvest's joys,
The corn must be sown in Spring.
Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed ;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.

Old Earth is a pleasure to see
In sunshiny coat of red and green ;
The furrow lies fresh ; this Year will be
As years that are past have been.
Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed ;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.

Old Mother, receive this corn,
The son of Six Thousand golden sires :
All these on thy kindly breast were born ;
One more thy poor child requires.
Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed ;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.

Now steady and sure again,
And measure of stroke and step we keep ;
Thus up and down we cast our grain :
So well, and you gladly reap.
Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed ;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.

The Old Workman

'WHY are you so bent down before your time,
Old mason? Many have not left their prime
So far behind at your age, and can still
Stand full upright at will.'

He pointed to the mansion front hard by,
And to the stones of the quoin against the sky;
'Those upper blocks,' he said, 'that there you see,
It was that ruined me.'

There stood in the air up to the parapet
Crowning the corner height, the stones as set
By him—ashlar whereon the gales might drum
For centuries to come.

'I carried them up,' he said, 'by a ladder there;
The last was as big a load as I could bear;
But on I heaved; and something in my back
Moved, as 'twere with a crack.

'So I got crookt. I never lost that sprain;
And those who live there, walled from wind and rain
By freestone that I lifted, do not know
That my life's ache came so.

'They don't know me, or even know my name,
But good I think it, somehow, all the same
To have kept 'em safe from harm, and right and tight,
Though it has broke me quite.

'Yes; that I fixed it firm up there I am proud,
Facing the hail and snow and sun and cloud,
And to stand storms for ages, beating round
When I lie underground.'

Two Sonnets from the Growth of Love

THEY that in play can do the thing they would,
Having an instinct throned in reason's place,
—And every perfect action hath the grace
Of indolence or thoughtless hardihood—
These are the best : yet there be workmen good
Who lose in earnestness control of face,
Or reckon means, and rapt in effort base
Reach to their end by steps well understood.

Me whom thou sawest of late strive with the pains
Of one who spends his strength to rule his nerve,
—Even as a painter breathlessly who strains
His scarcely moving hand lest it should swerve—
Behold me, now that I have cast my chains,
Master of the art which for thy sake I serve.

THE work is done, and from the fingers fall
The bloodwarm tools that brought the labour thro' :
The tasking eye that overrunneth all
Rests, and affirms there is no more to do.
Now the third joy of making, the sweet flower
Of blessed work, bloometh in godlike spirit ;
Which whoso plucketh holdeth for an hour
The shrivelling vanity of mortal merit.

And thou, my perfect work, thou'rt of to-day ;
To-morrow a poor and alien thing wilt be,
True only should the swift life stand at stay :
Therefore farewell, nor look to bide with me.
Go find thy friends, if there be one to love thee :
Casting thee forth, my child, I rise above thee.

Reply [1]

I

This day relenting God
Hath placed within my hand
A wondrous thing ; and God
Be praised. At His command,

Seeking His secret deeds
With tears and toiling breath,
I find thy cunning seeds,
O million-murdering Death.

I know this little thing
A myriad men will save.
O Death where is thy sting ?
Thy victory, O Grave ?

II

Before Thy feet I fall,
Lord, who made high my fate ;
For in the mighty small
Thou showedst the mighty great.

Henceforth I will resound
But praises unto Thee ;
Tho' I was beat and bound,
Thou gavest me victory.

Tho' in these depths of night
Deep-dungeon'd I was hurl'd,

[1] This poem was written on the day after Sir Ronald Ross discovered the malarial parasite after many years of research.

Thou sentest me a light
Wherewith to mend the world.

O Exile, while thine eyes
Were weary with the night
Thou weepedst ; now arise
And bless the Lord of Light.

Hereafter let thy lyre
Be bondsman to His name ;
His thunder and His fire
Will fill thy lips with flame.

He is the Lord of Light ;
He is the Thing That Is ;
He sends the seeing sight ;
And the right mind is His.

III

The cagèd bird awake
All night laments his doom,
And hears the dim dawn break
About the darken'd room ;

But in the day he sips,
Contented in his place,
His food from human lips,
And learns the human face.

So tho' his home remain
Dark, and his fields untrod,
The exile has this gain,
To have found the face of God.

Confounded at the close,
Confounded standing where

No further pathway shows,
We find an angel there

To guide us. God is good ;
The seeing sight is dim ;
He gives us solitude
That we may be with Him.

By that we have we lose ;
By what we have not, get ;
And where we cannot choose
The crown of life is set.

Lo, while we ask the stars
To learn the will of God,
His answer unawares
Strikes sudden from the sod.

Not when we wait the word
The word of God is giv'n ;
The voice of God is heard
As much from earth as heav'n.

The voice of God is heard
Not in the thunder-fit ;
A still small voice is heard,
Half-heard, and that is it.

Hedges

Two labourers, young and stout limbed, brush the hedge
Left thick and wild for long years next Butler's Lane,
Where pools and ruts sink deep in early spring
And make rough way for loaded harvest wains.

With crotch and bill and busy hands they cut
To the quick those proud unruly bushes, pitch
The naked poles and faggots in due heap,
Burn the limp green and stubborn thorn in ditch.

Lit with the sunset rose and yellow flame,
Brown arm, worn corduroys and easy swing
Flash to their part in some heroic tale—
These men take on the livery of kings.

DISCONTENT

Pierce The Plowman's Creed

. . . His coat of the cloth that is named carry-marry ;[1]
His hood full of holes, with his hair sticking through them ;
His clumsy knobbed shoes cobbled over so thickly,
Though his toes started out, as he trod on the ground ;
His hose hanging over each side of his hoggers,[2]
All plashed in the puddles as he followed the plough ;
His two miserable mittens made out of old rags,
The fingers worn out and the filth clotted on them—
He went wading in mud, almost up to the ankles,
And before him four oxen, so weary and feeble,
One could reckon their ribs, so rueful were they.
His wife walked beside him, with a long ox-goad,
In a clouted coat cut short to the knee,
Wrapped in a winnowing-sheet to keep out the weather ;
Her bare feet on the bleak ice bled as she went.
At one end of the acre, in a crumb-bowl so small,
A little babe lay, lapped up in rags.
And twins, two-years-old, tumbled beside it,
All singing one song that was sorrowful hearing,
For they all cried one cry, a sad note of care. . . .

[1] A coarse cloth. [2] Gaiters.

The Blacksmiths [1]

Swarte smekyd smethes smatered wyth smoke
Dryve me to death wyth den of here dyntes.
Such noys on nyghts ne herd men never :
What navens cry and clateryng of knockes !
The cammede kongons cryen after ' col, col ! '
And blowen here bellewes, that al here brayn breasts:
' Huf, puf ! ' saith that on ; ' Haf, paf ! ' that other.
Thei spitten and spraulyn and spellyn many spelles ;
Thei graven and gnacchen, thei groanys togedyr,
And holden hem hote wyth here hard hamers.
Of a bole-hyde ben here barm-fellys ;
Here shankes ben shakeled for the fere flunders ;
Here hamers thei han, that hard ben handled,
Stark strokes thei stryken on a stelyd stokke :
Lus, bus ! las, das ! rowtyn be rowe.
Such doleful a dreme the devil it todryve !
The mayster longith a litel, and laschet a lesse,
Twineth hem twain, and toucheth a treble :
Tik tak, hic hac, tiket taket, tyk tak !
Lus bus, las das ! sych lyfe thei ledyn
Alle clothemerys : Cryst hem give sorwe !
May no man for brenwaterys on nyght han hys rest !

[1] I have not modernised this poem, since this would destroy its onomatopæic excellence.

Gains and Pains

The labouring man that tills the fertile soil
And reaps the harvest fruit, hath not indeed
The gain, but pain ; and if for all his toil
He gets the straw, the lord will have the seed.

The manchet fine falls not unto his share,
On coarsest cheat his hungry stomach feeds ;
The landlord doth possess the finest fare,
He pulls the flowers ; the other plucks but weeds.

The mason poor, that builds the lordly halls,
Dwells not in them ; they are for high degree ;
His cottage is compact in paper walls,
And not with brick or stone as others be.

The idle drone, that labours not at all,
Sucks up the sweet of honey from the bee :
Who worketh most, to their share least doth fall ;
With due desert reward will never be.

The swiftest hare unto the mastiff slow
Oft-times doth fall, to him as for a prey ;
The greyhound thereby doth miss his game, we know,
For which he make such speedy haste away.

So he that takes the pain to pen the book,
Reaps not the gifts of goodly golden Muse,
But those gain that, who on the work shall look
And from the sour the sweet by skill doth choose.
For he that beats the bush the bird not gets,
But who sits still and holdeth fast the nets.

Caller Herrin'

Wha'll buy caller herrin' ?
They're bonnie fish and halesome farin' ;
Wha'll buy my caller herrin'
New drawn frae the Forth.
When ye were sleepin' on your pillows
Dreamt you ought o' our puir fellows,
Darkling as they faced the billows
A' to fill our woven willows.

An' when the creel o' herrin' passes,
Ladies clad in silks and laces
Gather in their braw pelisses,
Toss their heads and screw their faces.

Noo, neebor wives, come, tent my tellin'
When the bonnie fish ye're sellin',
At a word be aye your dealin',
Truth will stand when a' things failin'.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin' ?
They're no brought here without brave darin' ;
Buy my caller herrin',
Ye little ken their worth.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin' ?
O ye may ca' them vulgar farin' ;
Wives and mithers maist despairin'
Ca' them lives o' men.

Work

Who first invented work, and bound the free
And holyday-rejoicing spirit down
To the ever-haunting importunity
Of business in the green fields, and the town—
To plough, loom, anvil, spade—and oh! most sad,
To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?
Who but the being unblest, alien from good,
Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad
Task ever plies 'mid rotatory burnings,
That round and round incalculably reel—
For wrath divine that made him like a wheel—
In that red realm from which are no returnings;
Where toiling and turmoiling, ever and aye,
He, and his thoughts, keep pensive working-day.

The Song of the Shirt

With fingers weary and worn,
  With eyelids heavy and red,
A Woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
  Plying her needle and thread—
    Stitch ! stitch ! stitch !
In poverty, hunger and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the ' Song of the Shirt ! '

' Work ! work ! work !
While the cock is crowing aloof !
  And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof !
It's O ! to be a slave
  Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
  If this is Christian work !

' Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim,
  Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim !
Seam, and gusset, and band,
  Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
  And sew them on in a dream !

' O, Men with Sisters dear !
  O, Men with Mothers and Wives !
It is not linen you're wearing out,
  But human creatures' lives !

Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

'But why do I talk of Death?
That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep;
O God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

'Work—work—work!
My labour never flags;
And what are its wages? a bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shatter'd roof,—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

'Work—work—work!
From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work—
As prisoners work for crime!
Band and gusset and seam,
Seam and gusset and band,
Till the heart is sick and the brain benumb'd,
As well as the weary hand.

'Work—work—work,
In the dull December light,
And work—work—work,
When the weather is warm and bright—

While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the spring.

'O, but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet!—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet;
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal!

'O, but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!

'Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Work, work, work,
Like the Engine that works by Steam!
A mere machine of iron and wood
That toils for Mammon's sake—
Without a brain to ponder and craze
Or a heart to feel—and break!'

—With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A Woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—

Stitch ! stitch ! stitch !
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—
Would that its tone could reach the Rich !—
She sang this ' Song of the Shirt ! '

The Three Fishers

THREE fishers went sailing away to the West,
Away to the West as the sun went down ;
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town ;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbour bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down ;
They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown.
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbour bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women were weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come home to the town ;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep ;
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

Lyrics of the Coal-Fields

Get Up.

'Get up!' the caller calls, 'Get up!'
And in the dead of night,
To win the bairns their bite and sup,
I rise a weary wight.

My flannel dudden donn'd, thrice o'er
My birds are kiss'd, and then
I with a whistle shut the door
I may not ope again.

The Stars are Twinkling.

The stars are twinkling in the sky
As to the pit I go;
I think not of the sheen on high,
But of the gloom below.

Nor rest or peace, but toil and strife,
Do there the soul enthral;
And turn the precious cup of life
Into a cup of gall.

Mother Wept.

Mother wept, and father sighed;
With delight aglow
Cried the lad, 'To-morrow,' cried
'To the pit I go.'

Up and down the place he sped,—
Greeted old and young;
Far and wide the tidings spread;
Clapt his hands and sung.

Came his cronies ; some to gaze
  Wrapt in wonder ; some
Free with counsel ; some with praise ;
  Some with envy dumb.

' May he,' many a gossip cried,
  ' Be from peril kept.'
Father hid his face and sigh'd,
  Mother turn'd and wept.

The Man with the Hoe

(*Written after seeing Millet's world-famous painting*)

God made man in his own image, in the image of God made he him.—GENESIS.

BOWED by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream he dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swinging of the Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?

Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those that shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

The Church Builder

THE church flings forth a battled shade
Over the moon-blanched sward ;
The church ; my gift ; whereto I paid
My all in hand and hoard ;
Lavished my gains
With stintless pains
To glorify the Lord.

I squared the broad foundations in
Of ashlared masonry ;
I moulded mullions thick and thin,
Hewed fillet and ogee :
I circleted
Each sculptured head
With nimb and canopy.

I called in many a craftsmaster
To fix emblazoned glass,
To figure Cross and Sepulchre
On dossal, boss, and brass.
My gold all spent,
My jewels went
To gem the cups of Mass.

I borrowed deep to carve the screen
And raise the ivoried Rood ;
I parted with my small demesne
To make my owings good.
Heir-looms unpriced
I sacrificed,
Until debt-free I stood.

So closed the task. ' Deathless the Creed
Here substanced ! ' said my soul :
' I heard me bidden to this deed,
And straight obeyed the call.
Illume this fane,
That not in vain
I build it, Lord of all ! '

But, as it chanced me, then and there
Did dire misfortunes burst ;
My home went waste for lack of care,
My sons rebelled and curst ;
Till I confessed
That aims the best
Were looking like the worst.

Enkindled by my votive work
No burning faith I find ;
The deeper thinkers sneer and smirk,
And give my toil no mind ;
From nod and wink
I read they think
That I am fool and blind.

My gift to God seems futile, quite ;
The world moves as erstwhile ;
And powerful wrong on feeble right
Tramples in olden style.
My faith burns down,
I see no crown ;
But Cares, and Griefs, and Guile.

So now, the remedy ? Yea, this :
I gently swing the door
Here, of my fane—no soul to wis—
And cross the patterned floor

To the rood screen
That stands between
The nave and inner chore.

The rich red windows dim the moon,
But little light need I ;
I mount the prie-dieu, lately hewn
From woods of rarest dye ;
Then from below
My garment, so,
I draw this cord, and tie

One end thereof around the beam
Midway 'twixt Cross and truss :
I noose the nethermost extreme,
And in ten seconds thus
I journey hence—
To that land whence
No rumour reaches us.

Well : Here at morn they'll light on one
Dangling in mockery
Of what he spent his substance on
Blindly and uselessly ! . . .
' He might,' they'll say,
' Have built, some way,
A cheaper gallows-tree ! '

The Young Glass-Stainer

'THESE Gothic windows, how they wear me out
With cusp and foil, and nothing straight or square,
Crude colours, leaden borders roundabout,
And fitting in Peter here, and Matthew there !

'What a vocation ! Here do I draw now
The abnormal, loving the Hellenic norm ;
Martha I paint, and dream of Hera's brow,
Mary, and think of Aphrodite's form.'

The Builders

STAGGERING slowly, and swaying
Heavily at each slow foot's lift and drag,
With tense eyes careless of the roar and throng,
That under jut and jag
Of half-built wall and scaffold streams along,
Six bowed men straining strong
Bear, hardly lifted, a huge lintel stone.
This ignorant thing and prone,
Mere dumbness, blindly weighing,
A brute piece of blank death, a bone
Of the stark mountain, helpless and inert,
Yet draws each sinew till the hot veins swell
And sweat-drops upon hand and forehead start,
Till with short pants the suffering heart
Throbs to the throat, where fiercely hurt
Crushed shoulders cannot heave ; till thought and sense
Are nerved and narrowed to one aim intense,
One effort scarce to be supported longer !
What tyrant will in man or God were stronger
To summon, thrall and seize
The exaction of life's uttermost resource
That from the down-weighed breast and aching knees
To arms lifted in pain
And hands that grapple and strain
Upsurges, thrusting desperate to repel
The pressure and the force
Of this, which neither feels, nor hears, nor sees ?

The Sower

Ridge on ridge the great fields lie,
Endless under the autumn sky ;
Scattered huts, but never a tree
On the brown waves of fertility :
And upon them, strong and light,
From dawn's dusk to that of night
Moves a man, forward and back,—
Like a Titan near at hand,
Like a fly from overhead,—
Scattering ever in his track
On the grim, unwilling land
The grey germs of living bread.
He sows the bitter seed of Time,
The long harvest of life and death,
And the prayers of broken hearts.

While his legs beneath him stride,
With his right hand in a sack
He dips, then quick-flinging back,
Casts the wheat-grains far and wide,
Furrow on furrow, row on row,
He traverses acres so,
Unarmoured 'gainst the bitter chill,
Unstrengthened but by his own will :—
His feet are swollen, blackened, ground
With the clumsy clogs they're bound,
Yet they spring with power sure,
To the last day they endure :
His legs, in stringy sinew cast,
Millions of engines have surpassed ;

Above his shirt, tattered at breast,
Works a gnarled and hairy chest ;
His arms swing mightier than steel cranes,
His grizzled skull is bare to rains,
And in his deep eyes light does lie
As in a snake's or an eagle's eye.
He sows the bitter seed of Time,
The long harvest of life and death,
And the prayers of broken hearts.

He has not known art's mystery.
Progress ? It has passed him by.
History speaks naught of him.
And his spirit rude and dim,
Never hears a call to wake
While the dark fields freeze and bake
Under this cruel, empty heaven :
Whereto, as by mockery driven,
All his hope—how little ! fled
From the terrible crushing dread
Of old age and pain and death,
Sole reward for all his breath
Spent in toil, barren and drear.
His forefathers have walked here,
And their footsteps mark them not :
The strong arms wherewith they tossed
The grain, are rotted long to dust :—
And his son in the self-same spot
Must trudge steadily in his place,
And behind him *his* son's face
Comes, marked with toil,—and a great race
To the dim future stride on by,
Long as the leaden earth shall fly,
Till the sun falls from the sky,
They sow the bitter seed of Time,
The long harvest of life and death,
And the prayers of broken hearts.

Yet, lacking him, all things were vain :
'Tis his sweat, his blood, his pain,
Which have made all that shall be.
What the earth could not, that he
Is doing, and he knows it not !
From the brown breast, no more hot,
Of his own mother tearing bread,
Without which all men were dead.
Under whose feet that crush the clods
Spring the heroes and the gods :
At the great gesture of that hand,
Science and art overspread the land :
From those fingers bent with pain,
Cities fall, as falls the grain :
And life's pulse, more than all beside,
Hangs on the rhythm of that stride :—
He sows the bitter seed of Time,
The long harvest of life and death,
And the prayers of broken hearts.

Steadily, to the brown fields bare,
He gives green life which makes the air
Anew, from a stagnant, breathed-out fen,
To a moving freedom, fit for men.
He casts life's crimson, slender thread
From the dark caverns of the dead
Out to a vast futurity,
So full of light, we may not see.
He scatters the stars upon the night :
Through him alone in endless flight
Of boundless joys and tragedies,
They move, on the cold and hollow seas
Of emptiness, which knows not dearth,
Since it nor life nor sorrow hath.
Unwitting, even as God hath wrought,
From thoughtlessness he weaves firm thought :

He knows naught save what he creates,
He has achieved his mastering fates,
And, mystery of mystery,
To himself he prays—ah me !—
That what he has done may forgiven be.
He sows the bitter seed of Time,
The long harvest of life and death,
And the prayers of broken hearts.

Coal

A VALLEY, narrow as the pit,
Without a blossoming thing in it :
Raw and dirty, an unwashed wound.
In the midst, insurgently rise
Wheels' sharp-fretted traceries,
Chimneys that score with smoke the skies.
It is a cancer spot, a fane,
A mass of hovels, a city of men,
A mart of mud and blood and gold,
A thing that clings to earth's bosom cold
And sucks the last drops from her breasts running dry,
Gorging the coal as it comes from the mine.

Grind of wheels and clank of pumps
Make the thick air twitch and shrink
Like broken nerves, throughout the day.
As dawn throws his torch in the soot-hung sky
An aimless procession shuffles by :
The men march out for another day
Of darkness in the pits below.
When the dusk swoops swiftly down,
Like a black vulture on the town,
They shamble back the self-same way,
Towards the mocking bedazzling glow
Of bar-rooms, seeking with hungry eyes
Over the streets for their victories.
But they have borne their prize away ;
Black, but with life-blood dripping red,
It fills their wastes with sense and soul ;

It makes all love and hate and strife,
Fairer than song, better than bread,
The harvest hope, the life of life,
Coal !

Downwards suddenly plunge the cages
From the daylight, to the vast
Abysmal silence of the night :
Now the thick earth holds them fast :
The slaves who sell life for death's wages,
Risking indifferently the blast
Of gas exploding, that choking death.
They tumble into iron carts
Their grimy bodies, as they start,
An echo follows them behind
Through the mean tunnels which drearily wind
Onward and on.
Clanking, clattering, bumping, grinding,
The carts roll through them, onward and on.

At last, they make a sudden stay.
Lo now, beneath a spluttering ray,
The half-stripped bodies at their toil !
Backs that gleam as wet with oil ;
Picks alternately aswing,
Crashing with dull and sullen ring ;
Hewing the thick tough carbon out.
These men strive stoutly there, no doubt,
At the sacred shrine of their joy and despair !
One of them, weary and loath,
Yawns, and mutters an obscene oath :
Another spits, and one agape
Grins, expectant of some jape.
But the steel picks rise and fall,—
Relentless pendulums,—through it all.

Blood of it and bone of it,
Above on earth, are men in towns ;
Statesmen, churchmen, rogues and clowns,
Doing all things fit, unfit :
Palaces and hairpins making,
Pamphleteering, loafing, baking.
Black, but with life blood dripping red,
It fills their breasts with sense and soul :
It makes all love and hate and strife,
Fairer than song, better than bread,
The harvest hope, the life of life—
Coal.

The Disaster

AGAINST the sunset's rose
Purple the pit-head glows—
The mound of slate and slack
That all day long gloomed black :

And the gaunt shaft-wheel seems
Hub to a wheel of dreams,
With flaming spokes that whirl
In a celestial swirl

Of hues beneath whose fire,
With patience naught can tire,
Quiet, with close-shawled head,
Each woman 'waits her dead.

The Plough Team Talks

Filly :

What do ye think :
Why should we swink ?
Why ever go,
Up and down so,
Year in, year out,
Ploughing and hoeing,
Never without
Their gee-ing and whoa-ing ?

Gelding :

Not so bad, they—
I nicker, yea,
I neigh a little
At thought of their victual ;
Surely, I say,
Not so bad they.

Old Mare :

Thou and thy victual !
Thou gelding, thou wittol !
Quicken thy pace !
Slack is thy trace—
And thou, froward filly,
Art but young and silly ;
Content ye then therefore ;
I, as the men folk,
Know of each day's yoke
The why and wherefore.

Filly :

Little reck I
Of their when and why.
I know when I rear
They have me in fear,
And hasten to tie me.
But once on the hill
I galloped my fill
And none dare come nigh me.

Old Mare :

'Twas ere I did train thee—
Now, as thou knowest,
When gallus thou goest
'Tis I that restrain thee.

Filly :

But slumbers my hate ;
Deep in my brain
Ever I wait
To fear them again.

Gelding :

Wenches ! go steady :
For belly saith now
Stable is ready,
And loosed from the plough
Turn we our faces
Farmward to go,
Jingling our traces,
All three in a row—
Pleasant is a stable
When belly doth call.

Filly :

Aye ! pleasant is stable,
Tïe-rope and stall !
To oxen pleasant
And shamed things like thee,
Content by a peasant
Chivvied to be.
The plough at thy haunch
Day after day,
Then filling thy paunch
With doles of their hay—
Nor labour nor food
Chimes with my mood,
For the brisk wind
That shrills in my ear
Puts me in mind
Of the Spring of the year—
Of one who goes proudly,
Scorning the plough ;
Of one who calls loudly,
Not such as thou !

Gelding :

I am as good a one
As e'er a stallion
That goeth nickering
By our farm gate—
But cease we our bickering,
Peace to thy prate.
For now from bin and stack
Plenished is crib and rack :
Come, let us be speedy.

Old Mare :

Go, wanton ! Go, greedy !
Thou to thy dalliance,

Thou to thy meat !
Well may'st thou firk and prance
Thy idle feet !
I have seen come and pass
Many a summer's grass :
Ever did evil days
Follow new fangled ways ;
And much I do misdoubt
That ere the year be out
Thou'lt learn, as thou starvest,
Short yokes make short harvest !

Out of Work

ALONE at the shut of day was I,
With a star or two in a frost clear sky,
And the byre smell in the air.

I'd tramped the length and breadth o' the fen ;
But never a farmer wanted men ;
Naught doing anywhere.

A great calm moon rose back o' the mill,
And I told myself it was God's will
Who went hungry and who went fed.

I tried to whistle, I tried to be brave ;
But the new ploughed fields smelt dank as the grave ;
And I wished I were dead.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO. LTD.
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, GLASGOW